Her silken tresses piled on high
Are quite misleading to the eye,
You'd think her more;
Yet this embodiment we see
Of feminine divinity
Is only four!

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By permission of the Berlin Photographic Co., 133 New Bond St., W.

"WHICH MAY I KEEP?"

From the Painting by A. J. Elsley.

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By permission of Messrs. Louis Wolf & Co., Ltd., 245 Tottenham Court Road, London, W.C.
"Blind Man's Buff."
From the painting by John Hayes.

CAT STORIES.

By RUDOLPH DE CORDOVA.

NEXT to the love of dogs in the human heart comes unquestionably the love of cats, though a census would probably show that, because of their utility in the destruction of mice, they are even more generally kept than dogs are.

The affection of cats for those who care for them is nearly, if not quite, as strongly marked as the affection which dogs exhibit, though there is perhaps a popular belief to the contrary. Cats, by reason of the greater capacity they have than dogs in certain respects, have demonstrated this quality. The Earl of Southampton, during his imprisonment in the Tower, was astonished one day to find that his pet was in his cell. The little creature had actually discovered his whereabouts, as if it were a dog, and had climbed up to the roof of the building and made its way down the chimney in order to be with him.

A similar capacity to discover the whereabouts of a well-beloved master was described by Professor Wood, the famous naturalist, in the case of a cat which belonged to a young married couple in the north of Scotland. The land in the neighbourhood is narrow and considerably cut into by deep inlets to the sea. The house of the young people was thus near the ocean. For certain reasons they determined to remove to the opposite coast. The country between the old house and the new one was hilly, and the roads were not good, so they resolved to make the journey by boat, and all their goods and chattels were removed in that way.

Before leaving, however, they gave the cat to a neighbour. After some weeks the cat turned up at the new house. She was dirty, ragged, and half starved, and clearly showed that she had made the journey over land. How it was she had discovered the whereabouts of her old owners could never be ascertained, and it must be admitted that the journey she successfully undertook was an extraordinary one.

Remarkable as was this cat's power of discovering the whereabouts of its owners, the following case shows that it is not by any means unique. A cat belonging to a gentleman who lived in New York had three kittens. Unwilling to drown them, and

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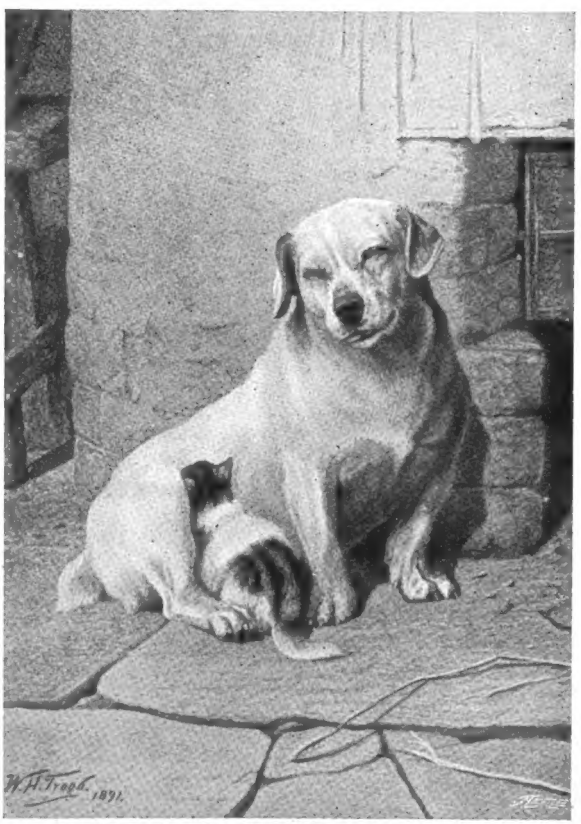
unable to get any of his friends to accept them as a gift, he resolved to lose them in the hope that they would find homes of their own.

One cold winter's day he locked up the mother cat in the kitchen, and putting the three kittens into a basket, he went off to a neighbouring park and deposited them in different parts of it. An hour later, to his amazement, he saw the mother cat entering the house with a kitten in her mouth.

When he went to look, he found that she had already brought home the other two. Moved by the circumstance, he kept the kittens for another month, and then determined to get rid of them. He took them half-a-mile away from the house and lost them. Within two hours the mother cat had escaped from the room in which she was locked, had found her kittens and had brought them back again, though how she discovered where they were the gentleman was never able to find out.



By permission of Messrs. Henry Graves & Co., Ltd., 6 Pall Mall, London, W.

"An Old Man's Darling."

From the painting by W. H. Trood.

The affection which often exists between dogs and cats has been productive of many striking characteristics, demonstrating pussy's capacity for affection, tenderness, and warm friendship. Some people had a kitten which had the misfortune to lose its mother. A dog with a litter of puppies acted the part of foster-mother to the little kitten. When it grew up it always exhibited the warmest regard for the dog. After a while the dog became ill, and puss used to make a point of taking food to her foster-mother every day.

At last it was resolved to put an end to the poor creature's sufferings by poison. When the dog was poisoned the cat refused for a long time to go near its owner or the gardener, evidently believing that they were responsible for the untimely end of the creature she loved so dearly.

A lady living in Leicester had a cat and a dog, and both animals became mothers about the same time. The puppies were all drowned, and the disconsolate mother adopted one of the kittens as her own. The mother cat resented being deprived of her offspring in this way. The result was, for a time, particularly pleasing for the kitten, for it was fed both by its own mother and by its foster-mother.

Eventually the foster-mother won the day. She used to give a peculiar bark outside the door of the room in which the cats lived. The kitten would run off with the dog, and together they would go chasing rabbits, one of which they would sometimes catch and kill. After a time the dog had another litter of puppies which she was allowed to keep. The foster-child, however, having been initiated into the joys of hunting, continued the pastime; and when she succeeded in catching a rabbit would take it home for the dog.

Another hunting cat was one which had learnt to catch birds alive, and would carry them to its master's feet without even hurting a feather. Its great friend was a dog which had the bad habit of getting into the hearth, for which it was beaten. Recognising that

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a particular stick was always used for the purpose of chastisement, the cat hid the stick in order to prevent its friend being hurt.

That cats will live in amity with other animals which they usually destroy is a fact of which many a cage, standing at a street corner to attract the casual penny from the pocket of the onlooker, will furnish evidence. This characteristic is seen at its height in the by no means rare cases in which cats have become the foster-parents of different kinds of animals.

Mr. James Forwood, of Darlington, Hertford County, U.S.A., once had a cat which adopted a brood of motherless chickens. The animal's solicitude for her adopted offspring was extraordinary, and the chickens learnt to recognise the cat's purr in exactly the same way as normal chickens recognise the cluck of the mother hen as the signal to go to her. Sometimes a chicken would stray too far away for the cat's peace of mind. She would go for it, and take it back to the brood, holding it tenderly by the back of the neck in exactly the same way as if it were a kitten. Realising, too, their need of protection, the cat would gather all the chickens together, and lie down in such a way as to cover them as carefully as a hen.

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"Kiss and be Friends."

From the painting by A. J. Elsley.

That dogs will guard the possessions of their owners is well known. Few people, however, have given cats credit for a similar capacity, though they deserve it.

A lady on one occasion wrote to the *Spectator* of a cat which would, at the word of command, watch her dinner without ever attempting to touch the food. If she was called out of the room she would cry: "Now, Dot, take care of this till I come back." The cat would at once jump on to the side of the table, never move until the mistress returned to take her place, and was always content if a morsel of meat was given

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By permission of Messrs. C. W. Faulkner & Co., Ltd., 79 Golden Lane, London, E.C.
"You Mustn't Pull."
From the painting by A. J. Elley.

to it as a reward. So obedient was this cat that even when its dinner was put before it, it never touched it until permission was given.

Madame Sophie Menter, the famous pianist, used often to intrust the care of her jewels to a favourite cat, and never had reason to regret the confidence she reposed in her pet.

An even better known cat is the pet of another distinguished pianist, Mademoiselle Janotha. It rejoices in the name of White Heather, for the sufficient reason that it is as black as the proverbial ace of spades. No other cat has such an aristocratic list of acquaintances, for it is on terms of familiarity with most of the crowned heads of Europe. Queen Victoria actually knitted a piece of wool for White Heather to play with, while the German Empress' favour is shown by the fact that Her Imperial Majesty always calls the cat, which, it is recorded, once saved the life of a white mouse, Othello.

Another cat with Royal friends bore the nickname of Royal Tom, because the late Duke of Saxe-Coburg (the Duke of Edinburgh) took much notice of it. The cat was a foundling, and always sat in the window of a certain hairdresser's establishment in Prince's Street, Edinburgh. There it never failed to attract a great deal of attention, for it was so large that it weighed twenty-two and a half pounds. When Queen Alexandra, then, of course, Princess of Wales, was staying at the Douglas Hotel, Edinburgh, with the young Princes and Princesses, "Royal Tom" was commanded to appear before the Royal family. Perhaps the honour was more than it could stand, for it died the following year. Its skin was stuffed, and for a long time, if not now, it could be seen, wearing a silver collar, presented by the late Countess of Breadalbane.

Mr. Jesse has recorded another characteristic which cats have—that of forming strange

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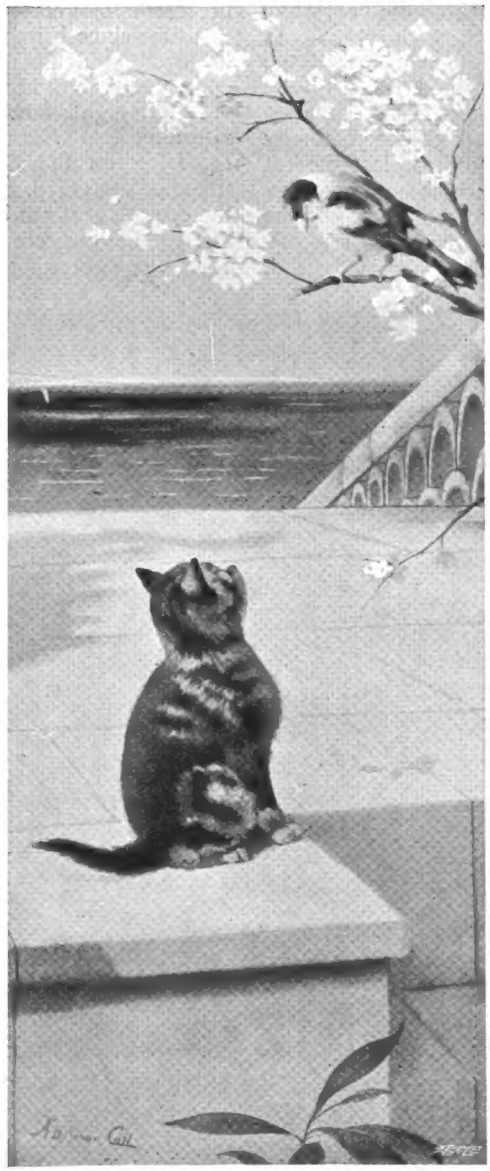
companionships. An engineer told him that while he was engaged in working a beacon in a swamp in America he caught a young alligator, between which and his cat a great friendship sprang up. They would run up and down the stairs of the house together in their play, and when night came they would sleep together, the alligator's head resting on the cat.

An explanatory sidelight is perhaps thrown on this matter by a story related by a correspondent in the *New York Sun*, which story may be held to show that the alligator instinctively knew it was no match for the cat if it came to a tussle.

A river in one of the Southern States was infested with alligators, which, though not very large, were very active and vicious, so that it was dangerous for children or animals to go near the bank.

A certain cat, however, which, like the famous one in the adage to which Lady Macbeth referred on a memorable occasion, would eat fish, but was not afraid to wet her feet, was in the habit of going to the river to feed on mussels and fish, which she caught herself.



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"A Bird Fancier."

From the painting by Allinson Cull.

One day it was noticed that, as the cat moved along the bank in her quest, there was a ripple in the water, which proved that an alligator was there, and was keeping pace with pussy. The cat, too, seemed perfectly aware that she was being followed, but exhibited no sign of fear, and went on fishing quite unconcernedly. At length the cat went too near the water. The alligator, which was about three feet long, made a dash, and caught her by her hind legs. With a vigorous wrench the cat got away, but she was evidently badly hurt, for she bled a good deal. Made vicious by the taste of blood, the alligator went out on to the bank and followed the cat. As it made a dash at pussy, she turned on the alligator, and instead of being on the defensive went on the opposite tack.

In spite of her wounds she was so quick in her movements that it was impossible for the alligator to get a single bite at her. At length the reptile determined to get back into the water. This, however, the cat would not permit. By a rapid movement she got between the river and the alligator. By skilful rushes she would get in under the alligator's throat, biting it there and under the arms, where the skin is soft, until the alligator was bleeding from a hundred wounds, and completely exhausted. During the fight, which lasted three hours, the cat was never once touched by the alligator.

A remarkable Angora cat was one which belonged to a certain monastery in Paris. After a time it discovered that when the cook had served out the meal of each of the monks, a bell was rung and the cook went away. The handle of the bell happened to hang conveniently low, so one day the cat

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tried and succeeded in ringing the bell. The cook, hearing the signal, went away. As soon as he was gone, the cat entered the refectory, and having helped itself to the dinner of one of the monks, left the room.

The success of the device naturally prompted its repetition, until at last the cat was watched and the whole episode discovered. In a little while the cat became quite a feature of the monastery, and the visitors used to pay a fee on purpose to see it steal the dinner.

A striking instance of a cat's memory has been recorded by Mr. Marvin Clark with reference to a cat named Fritz, which belonged to Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Heath, of Syracuse, in the State of New York. Fritz was an exceedingly clever cat, and though not on the professional stage, on which, for all one knows to the contrary, it might have looked down, nevertheless performed many of the tricks of professional cats, jumping through hoops and turning somersaults at the word of command.

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"A Young Girl with a Cat."
From the photo by Levy et ses Fils.

Fritz's mother, Gyp, also graced the Heath household with her presence. One day Fritz went out and did not come back. When bed-time came Gyp was taken as usual to the basket in which both cats slept, but she refused to go in. She merely sniffed at the basket and walked away. Mr. and Mrs. Heath were greatly attached to Fritz, and they instituted a thorough search for their pet, but did not succeed in finding it. Two years went by and Fritz was almost forgotten.

One evening, however, Gyp returned home in a state of great excitement, and for the first time since Fritz's departure she took up her position in the old basket and, purring contentedly, went to sleep.

A few nights later, Mr. and Mrs. Heath, returning home from a friend's house, saw a cat lying on the doorstep. At first they thought it was Gyp. As soon as they opened the door the cat ran in and immediately ran out again. They shut the door, but, attracted by a piteous mewing, they opened it again, thinking that it was merely a strange wayfarer which they intended to feed. As soon as the door was opened for the second time, the cat darted in.

"Why, it's Fritz!" said Mrs. Heath, recognising the animal in the light. Hearing its name, the cat showed every symptom of joy. It turned somersaults, jumped about, and went through its regular little bag of tricks as if for the purpose of establishing its identity beyond suspicion.

In the days of its unrestrained youth Fritz had been in the wars, and had had one of its ears split open. Remembering this fact, Mr. and Mrs. Heath picked up the animal to see if it bore the mark. There was the split ear. As a final test they threw a stick down the stairs, and said: "Fetch it, Fritz." The cat ran for it and brought it back like a retriever. Presently it caught sight of the basket in which it used to sleep and jumped into it. Gyp was in it, and resenting the intrusion, administered a sharp rap to Fritz. Then she recognised her offspring, and the next minute she was kissing and fondling Fritz with a tenderness almost human.

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FOUR PAGES

The History of a Correspondence.

By Brinsley Moore.

I.—PROLOGUE.

"There are, of course, four pages to a sheet of note-paper. The reasonable and sensible method is to fill these in their proper order, i.e., *on reaching the foot of page one turn over and continue the letter on page two, and so on. The curious variation of this natural order—a variation especially characteristic of feminine correspondents, who will frequently pass on from page one to fill up page three, and then return to page two—is always irritating and puzzling to the recipient, and may quite conceivably lead to serious misapprehension and confusion."* The Complete Letter Writer.

THE FIRST PAGE

Eversley Grange.
Cliffolk
May 3rd 1907

My Dear Miss Brown.

I was very glad to receive your letter and to hear news of old friends. The arrival of your letter was a very pleasant reminder of happy days in the past.

I am interested to hear that Major Thompson is coming to reside in your neighbourhood. The Major is very well known about here, being a second cousin of Lord Rattlebury of Lessington Court, and he is connected with many very wealthy people, but between ourselves, he himself is

OVER THE LEAF (THE INNER PAGES)

a scoundrel of the most abominable character. After a long career of vice and dishonesty, he deserted his wife and children. The wife is selling matches in the streets of Birmingham. The poor children starving. And all the time he had been posing as a single man. The very day that I discovered his true character I found him in the kitchen making love to the cook! Of course I ordered him out of the house at once—and after his departure 5 silver tablespoons were missing. I strongly advise you to have nothing to do with him.

Your new vicar, the Rev. James Beresford is not unknown to me. It is unfortunate that the value of the living is so small, as he has the reputation of being rather poor, owing to some unfortunate speculations. He is personally a most delightful and charming man—a decided acquisition to your social circle. After his wife's death, he travelled for several years in the East, and has come back with all sorts of strange notions. His sister told me in confidence that he is really a Buddhist in his beliefs. But if he seems probable he should marry again no doubt a good, sensible wife will soon knock all these silly ideas out of his head.

With regard to John Smith my late groom, who has applied to you for your vacant post. I had already under a misapprehension furnished him with a written testimonial. I hope it is not too late to tell you privately that I have found him

THE LAST PAGE

very hard working and energetic. He gained golden opinions in all the places where he has previously laboured, and bears a most estimable and lofty character. The sort of man whom you can thoroughly trust and esteem.

I am just starting off with the Hitchcombes for a month in Switzerland. As we shall be moving about I cannot give you an address; but I shall hope to find a nice newsy letter from you awaiting me on my return.

With kind remembrances to all friends.

Believe me, dear Miss Brown
Yours very sincerely
Helena Holcroft Jones

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II.—THE EFFECT.

A collection of letters awaiting Mrs. Melcroft-Jones at Eversley Grange on her return from Switzerland.

1.

From Miss Priscilla Brown.

Linden House, Middleford,
May 4th, 1906.

DEAR MRS. MELCROFT-JONES,—

I am not *sure* if this will reach you before you start on your trip, but I am sending it off *on the chance*, as I feel that I ought to write *at once* to thank you for such a nice *confidential* and *helpful* letter.

W. J. THOMPSON.

I shall certainly act on the advice you give with regard to *that awful Major*, and I think I have sufficient influence in Middleford society to insure him *no pleasant reception* when he comes into residence next week. I have already hinted to *several leading people* enough of his past life and character to open their eyes to the danger. But is it not sad to think that our aristocracy, who ought to set an example to *the lower classes*, should be thus disgraced by a man of such *an abominable character?*

I have no doubt Major Thompson thinks that by moving into a new neighbourhood he will get a fresh start amongst people who will not know *his real history*, and will be dazzled by his *noble connections*—but he will find out his mistake.

I am shocked, too, by what you tell me of our new Vicar. Things have indeed come to a pretty pass, when *high positions* in the Church are conferred on *Mormons* (or was it a Buddhist you said he was? Your letter is upstairs, and I won't stop to fetch it. But it does not matter—*the principle* is the same.).

I went *at once* to the churchwardens about it; but while they were *very much astonished*, they did not seem inclined to take any steps. So I have put the matter in the hands of old Mr. Tollington, who is already discontented with *many things* in the parish, and fully recognises this *new danger* which threatens us. He is calling a meeting of *people whom we can trust*, and we are going to petition the Bishop at once to remove *such an unworthy pastor* from our midst. How anyone with his opinions can dare to take such an office upon him *in Christian England* is beyond my understanding.

As you will guess, it is *exceedingly unpleasant* to me to take these steps. But in each case, after the information you have given me, I have felt it *a plain duty* which I owe to society and the Church, and a duty from which *I must not shrink*. Of course, I have not mentioned your name in the matter—I have simply pledged myself in each case that my information is *absolutely correct* and derived from *an unimpeachable source*. I think you will be glad to know that your *warnings* have not been without effect.

With all good wishes for a pleasant time in Switzerland,

Believe me,
Very sincerely yours,
PRISCILLA BROWN,

P.S.—After your *unqualified commendation* of John Smith, I have no hesitation in engaging him as groom. I am very glad to have secured a man of whom you can speak *so highly*.

2.

From Major Thompson.

The Limes, Middleford,
May 28th, 1906.

DEAR MRS. MELCROFT-JONES,—

My sister informs me that you have been in Switzerland, and I do not know if you have yet returned. But I am writing in the hope that if you are back in England, you will at once help me in a very curious difficulty.

Upon my return from India, I was led to settle in this place by hearing it described (both by yourself, and also by my friend, Mrs. Cathcart, who lives in the neighbourhood) as a pleasant residence with agreeable society. So far, I must confess, I have not realised the latter part of this description.

In spite of the fact that I have been introduced by Mrs. Cathcart to various people, I have been conscious from the outset of a marked reserve and unfriendliness on the part of most of those with whom I have come in contact. I put this down at first to provincial exclusiveness and reserve. I even persuaded myself that these impoverished gentlefolk and retired tradespeople might be a little afraid of my connection with Lord Ratlebury, and might have some silly idea that I should consider myself above them. Judge of my surprise to discover that I am not considered good enough for them!

The discovery came to me the other day. There is a curious little old maid here named Miss Priscilla Brown, who seems to have taken

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the lead amongst those who are bent on giving me the cold shoulder. Her hostility has been so marked that I could not mistake it; and meeting her alone upon the road I resolved on an effort to get at the root of the mystery.

I think I approached a difficult subject as skilfully as possible. I said that I was conscious that by some means I had incurred her disapproval, and expressed my regret if in any way I had unwittingly given her reason for offence. I was even proceeding to apologise beforehand for my unknown misdemeanour, when she interrupted me with an extraordinary proposal that, if I would let my house and withdraw from the neighbourhood, she would take no further steps in the matter!

I could only gasp in amazement:

"What on earth do you mean?"

She looked me full in the face, and said solemnly:

"*Major Thompson, I know your past!*"

Then she swept along the road with the air of a woman who had accomplished a painful but necessary duty, leaving me standing in speechless astonishment.

The very next evening, at one of the few houses where I am received in this exclusive neighbourhood, there was a bridge party. I arrived rather late, and an unkind fate decreed that the only vacancy was at Miss Brown's table. She not only refused me as a partner, but halfway through the game created a sensation by accusing me of stealing a florin which was missing from her little heap on the table!

I felt this was carrying the thing rather too far, and was naturally indignant.

"Madam!" I said, "I should have thought that my position and character——"

"Position and character!" she exclaimed, with really fine contempt. "*Who stole Mrs. Melcroft-Jones' silver spoons?*"

Then she had to be led out of the room in a highly hysterical condition, crying out something about "her duty to society."

Of course, I could not let the matter rest there, and next day I wrote to Miss Brown to request an explanation of her extraordinary conduct. I have just received her reply, in which she simply "declines to hold any further communication with Major Thompson, and refers him to Mrs. Melcroft-Jones herself if he questions the accuracy of her information."

Can you throw any light on this absurd business?

Yours very faithfully,
W. J. THOMPSON.

THE REV. J. BERESFORD.

3.

From the Rev. J. Beresford, M.A.

The Vicarage, Middleford.
29th May, 1906.

DEAR MRS. MELCROFT-JONES,—

The fact that we have occasionally met at the houses of mutual friends must be my excuse for troubling you with a very absurd, but also a very tiresome, matter.

You are no doubt aware that I have been presented to the living of Middleford, and have lately come into residence. I found, soon after my arrival, that unfortunately a certain section of my flock was somewhat restless and discontented; but I hoped that their attitude was only temporary, and that things would right themselves as we became better acquainted. One often finds these little difficulties on the advent of a new incumbent—especially where, as in this case, there has been no change for a generation.

But during my temporary absence last week, the opposition seems to have taken an active form. A meeting was held, at which most extraordinary statements were made, and a petition to the Bishop drawn up, requesting my immediate removal as a person totally unfit to hold my sacred office. The general accusation seems to be that, while posing as a Church of England clergyman, I am really a Buddhist or a Mormon!—the majority of my critics do not appear to be quite certain which.

Since my return, I have endeavoured to trace to its source this extraordinary agitation, and I find it originated with a certain Miss Brown, who resides in the parish. I called on Miss Brown to-day, and to my surprise she not only admits her responsibility, but affirms the absolute truth of her story! She declares that she derived her information from *you*, and that, if you will give her permission, she is prepared to produce a letter in your own handwriting, in which you definitely state, on the authority of a member of my

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own family, *that my real belief is that of a Buddhist!*

Of course, I am quite clear that she is labouring under some unfortunate misapprehension. But I shall be very grateful if you will give her permission to produce this letter, or will in some other way enable me to correct her statement, and so put an end to this preposterous and mischievous delusion.

I am,
Yours very truly,
J. BERESFORD.

4.

From Mrs. Cathcart.

Hensall Lodge,
nr. Middleford.
June 8th, 1906.

MY DEAR HELENA,—

As an old friend, I want you to be one of the first to hear my tidings. Major Thompson has proposed, and I have accepted him. I know you always expected this, and I remember you guessed that this idea had a good deal to do with his deciding to take up his residence in this part of the world. Well, you were quite right, and may send your congratulations as soon as you like! . . .

EMILY CATHCART.

And now I want to tell you some most extraordinary news. You remember old Miss Brown at Linden House? She has always been rather a gossip and a bit interfering; but I have until now respected her as a very conscientious and upright person. But, do you know, during the past few weeks, she has contrived to set the whole district in a ferment by a series of most extraordinary statements.

First she accused the new Vicar of being an Atheist or Buddhist in disguise, and persuaded a number of people to sign a petition to the Bishop to get him removed.

Then she created a scene at the Cliffords by accusing Major Thompson (just fancy!) of *stealing* a half-crown, which was afterwards found under the table.

And now—well, what has happened now is so outrageous that I find it difficult to tell you in the limits of a letter.

She called this afternoon to warn me against *Major Thompson!* She had heard, she said, that he was frequently visiting my house, and she felt sure I must be ignorant of what almost everybody else in the district was fully aware of—his disgraceful character and conduct!

I interrupted at once to tell her of my engagement, and to explain that I could not listen to such wicked gossip. She stared at me in astonishment.

"But, Mrs. Cathcart," she said, "it is quite impossible. Major Thompson is already a married man. *He has cruelly deserted his wife and children, and the poor woman is selling matches in the streets of Birmingham!*"

Then she went on to tell me a most astounding story of the Major's villainies. She declared that I was by no means the first poor woman he had deceived; that you yourself had told her how you had ordered him out of your house, because you *caught him in the kitchen making love to your cook!*

Now, of course, I don't really believe a word of this. It is simply unthinkable—and I should not have paid the least attention to such nonsense but for Miss Brown's repeated assurance that her information was derived from *you*, who know the whole family so well. So will you just write off at once, and give me authority to contradict these wicked libels?

Ever yours sincerely,
EMILY CATHCART.

5.

From Miss Priscilla Brown.

Linden House, Middleford,
June 8th, 1906.

DEAR MRS. MELCROFT-JONES,—

Are you now back at home? If so, will you please let me have a line *at once*, for I am in the midst of *such worries and anxieties* as you can hardly imagine.

In the first place, that *nicely-spoken, plausible man*, John Smith, whom I engaged as groom entirely on *your strong recommendation*, has turned out *an awful scamp*. He was left in charge of things while I went on a short visit to Nottingham, and, during the temporary absence of the other servants, he decamped with all my *old silver*, my *jewel-case*, and *cash-box*, and everything valuable he could lay his hands on!

Of course, I don't mean to say that it is

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your fault, but I *certainly* should never have trusted things to him as I have done, but for the *really extravagant terms* in which you wrote of *his character and reliability*.

It is, as you will understand, *a very serious loss*, and at any time would have greatly upset me. But just now, even this trouble is not my *worst*. Everything here seems to have got into a muddle—which only *you* can put right.

The information you gave me about the new Vicar and his Buddhist belief has caused even *a greater sensation* than I anticipated. There have been meetings, and discussions, and petitions to the Bishop—the whole thing, of course, *very unpleasant* to me; indeed, nothing but *a strong sense of duty* would have enabled me to go through with it. And now I am actually accused of starting "*a malicious and absurd falsehood*."

May I produce your letter of May 3rd as a proof of the *correctness* of my information? (I am inclosing the letter to which I refer, so that you may see for yourself, and I have marked the sentence about Buddhism on *page 3*, as the Vicar has the effrontery to declare that he hasn't got a sister!)

JOHN SMITH.

I shall be glad if you will let me produce this letter for another reason. That *odious Major Thompson* is still in the neighbourhood. I tried my best to get him to leave, and *even* offered to be silent about *his shameful story* if he would arrange to go away quietly and live somewhere else. But as he chose to disregard my *plain warning*, and still persists in inflicting himself on *our hitherto irreproachable social circle*, I have felt it *a solemn duty* to put everybody *on their guard* against him. In this I have been fairly successful—there are very few *decent houses* where he would now receive *a cordial welcome*.

But that dear Mrs. Cathcart, *the young widow* at Hensall Lodge, is a long way off and is *rather out of things*—I never thought of telling her. And now—would you believe it?—I find that the Major is very intimate there, and has even pretended to make her *an offer of marriage!* I saw Mrs. Cathcart to-day, and told her all about *the wife and children* at Birmingham, and also of that *disgraceful affair* with your cook. But she is *so infatuated* with the man that I could see she did not really believe me; and I am afraid nothing less than the evidence of *your own handwriting* will convince her of the truth.

Yours sincerely,
PRISCILLA BROWN.

III.—EPILOGUE.

A letter sent by Mrs. Melcroft-Jones (on her return from Switzerland) to Miss Priscilla Brown.

Eversley Grange,
Suffolk,
June 19th, 1906.

DEAR MISS BROWN,—

I have only just returned home, and am simply astounded by the letters (including your own) which I find awaiting me.

What have you been saying and doing? Major Thompson is, as I told you, a most charming and delightful person, very highly connected, and of irreproachable personal character. The match with Mrs. Cathcart is just what I expected and hoped for—they are in every way suited to one another.

As to your Vicar, I really do not know whether he has a sister or not, and I am quite at a loss to understand your strange interest in his family connections. I can only refer you to what I told you of the high reputation which he bears wherever he has formerly laboured. And why on earth, after my plain warning of the man's real character and history, did you engage a disreputable groom like John Smith?

With reference to the letter which I wrote to you just before I left England, you are certainly at liberty to show it to anybody you like, and I return it to you for this purpose.

But your curious reference to what you call "*page 3*" suggests to me the request that it may be read, not as if it were part of a printed book with consecutive pages, but after the order which I usually adopt in my private correspondence. After the first page, please go on to *what you call page 3*, then to page 2, and finally to page 4.

I think you will see clearly the absurdity of holding *me* responsible for the extraordinary and ridiculous stories which you appear to have been circulating.

Yours faithfully,
HELENA MELCROFT-JONES.

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A DAY IN THE LIFE OF AN ACTOR-MANAGER

Showing How Arduous His Profession is, and How Every Minute of His Time is Occupied.

Specially told for the ROYAL MAGAZINE by

George Alexander

WHEN the editor of the ROYAL MAGAZINE asks me to give a few details about my daily life, or, in other words, about the life of an actor-manager, he touches, I think, on a branch of the theatrical profession about which not a few grave misapprehensions exist. Indeed, I feel it would be no exaggeration to say that, even in these days, when so much space is devoted by the Press to theatrical enterprises, most members of the outside public, not actually connected with the stage, still cherish the fond notion that the life of an actor-manager, under modern conditions, is one in which hard work rarely, if ever, plays an important part.

Let me cite a case to exemplify my meaning. Not very long ago, when passing a well-known club in St. James's Street, I happened one morning to encounter a distinguished critic, who, although it was past eleven o'clock, greeted me with these words:

"Hallo, you don't mean to say you are up?"

"My dear fellow," I replied, "I don't only act, I have a shop to manage."

And, as a matter of fact, the control of a theatre is in all respects like the carrying on of any other commercial enterprise, only it is much more of a gamble. Moreover, all through my career as an actor-manager I have made it a rule that my theatre shall be managed on strictly business lines, otherwise I fear that it would have failed to show an adequate return for the labour bestowed on its control.

Personally, my day's work commences in earnest at nine, when I deal with my correspondence, which is considerable, comprising as it does all sorts and kinds of letters on all sorts and kinds of subjects, in addition to my ordinary business letters. For instance, applications from would-be actors and actresses are almost as numerous as blackberries in October; and although, curiously enough, the majority of the writers frankly confess they have had no practical experience of acting, yet, nevertheless, each aspirant to theatrical fame and fortune is, apparently, brimful of confidence that only the opportunity to prove his or her ability is wanting for another great artist to make a grateful bow to a still more grateful public at the fall of the curtain.

Many of these communications, alas! are brimful of pathos, and I almost shudder to think of the number of letters I receive from persons who have fought the battle of life bravely and without flinching—only to fail. Each letter tells a different story. There is, for instance, the young man who states that he was first attracted to the stage when he chanced to see me in such-and-such a piece. How I regret that he ever saw me! And how much more I regret that I cannot put him on the high road to success!

Then there is the young woman who feels that the stage is the one and only profession in the world for her, and is, in consequence, heartbroken because she cannot get there; and the man with years and a past he is proud of, grey hairs and a future he is afraid of. "Tell me," he says, "what there is for me to do."

To letters such as these it is not easy to find suitable replies, for the more one cheers the more hypocritical one feels. Besides, it

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is not fair to condemn ambition, and what good is there in pointing a moral when the lesson life has tried hard to teach has been passed unheedingly by? Still, it is far from cheering to feel that so many are knocking at the door, waiting to obtain a hearing on the stage to repair their shattered fortunes and secure a fresh start once again.

Times without number I have been asked what qualities are essential to success for an actor or an actress, so perhaps readers of THE ROYAL MAGAZINE may be interested to learn the results of my lengthy experience in this respect. The best actors and actresses, I can say, without a moment's hesitation, are those who are the keenest and best students of human nature. To them to live is to learn something fresh daily, to pick up a wrinkle here and there which will surely one day come in useful. They know no distinction of class; there is but one class, and it is to be found everywhere—life.

Yes, life it is, and when that life has been studied sufficiently keenly, when the student is better known by the name an author has given him than by the one he inherited from his father, then the world applauds —and wonders why he has not come to the front before, and tells his wife what a splendid profession is the stage for their children.

Personally, my day's work commences in earnest at nine, when I deal with my correspondence, which is considerable.

The children, therefore, adopt the stage, but, unfortunately, often they provide the dark scenes in a successful actor's work. They were born only to admire, and their parents cherish the fond delusion they came into the world to act. They fail. Some "go under at once," others lapse into mediocrity, and a few—well—what good is there in pursuing the results of such "cause and effect" to the bitter end? Why it should be so I do not know, but the fact remains that the belief is prevalent among a large section of the public that, no matter how completely they may fail to woo fortune in other walks of life, there always remains the stage as a career in which failure is impossible.

Requests for free seats from people I have never seen nor even heard of are of the commonest occurrence, and some of the reasons given as justification for asking for gratuitous theatre passes are most amusing. Thus, one gentleman, perhaps, happens to possess a surname of Alexander which, on many occasions, has been cited as sufficient excuse for a couple of stalls; while another refers to some occasion on which it is stated I had the honour of being introduced to him, or *vice versâ*, according to the valuation the writer puts upon his importance.

All such letters I pass on to the clerical staff at the theatre, and although I do not deal with them personally, applications of this sort tend to make wading through one's correspondence a longer business than would be the case otherwise.

Having disposed of the contents of my morning mail-bag, when there is no rehearsal the next item in my day is generally a short ride on horseback, for I am a firm believer in riding exercise as a valuable asset to good health; and then about eleven o'clock I go to the theatre, and remain there as long as is necessary, attending to the ordinary routine work, as I hold that an actor-manager should keep in close touch with every detail of work at his theatre.

I do not think I need refer to the ins and outs of routine work at a theatre, but when

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I say that at the St. James's there are over one hundred employees, including the managerial and clerical staff, the treasurers, box-office superintendents, check takers, money takers, ushers, electricians, carpenters, lime-light men, scene shifters, stage hands, call boys, each of whom, from the manager down to the humblest cleaner, has a daily fixed task to fulfil, it will be easily understood that there is sufficient detail work to supervise to occupy one's time fully, and, truth to tell, very often I wish that the working day were twice as long.

So the morning passes, and at one o'clock, or thereabouts, unless special appointments keep me at the theatre later, I return home to lunch, after which, whenever time permits, I make a regular practice of reading plays, of which, to strike a rough average, I receive about twenty-five a week. For although a strangely erroneous idea seems to exist that an actor-manager deliberately produces the worst plays—that he shuts the door to all outside merit, in fact—in reality, of course, he is only too eager to find a good play, no matter where it comes from. And that he makes a practice of refusing the work of unknown authors is, I think, not the least important of the many misapprehensions which exist in relation to the life of an actor-manager under modern conditions.

Since I commenced my management of the St. James's Theatre over sixteen years ago—on February 1st, 1891, to be precise—I have invariably relied upon my judgment of plays, which, happily, has seldom been at fault; but, naturally, one cannot always produce a good play. An actor-manager must be content with what he can get, for really fine plays like *His House in Order* and *John Glayde's Honour*, to cite two recent successes, are rarities, so that one has, perforce, to do one's best with the material at hand.

The reading of new plays is one of the most important duties in my day, but I regret to say that the majority of the manuscripts submitted do not show sufficient promise to merit production. Speaking of plays reminds me that I have brought out over a score of original plays, many of them being serious. In this connection I should like to mention *Lady Windermere's Fan*, *The Prisoner of Zenda*, *If I Were King*, *Liberty Hall*, *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray*, *The Ambassador*, *Paolo and Francesca*, *The Masqueraders*, *His House in Order*, and *John Glayde's Honour*.

Above all other considerations, I would lay stress upon the fact that a play to be a good play should be true to life, for even in a cursory glance through a manuscript nothing strikes one more unfavourably than a collection of stagey, stilted characters. But when the spectator says to himself: "How like so-and-so," in regard to some of the characters, and this thought is repeated throughout the entire audience in some way or another, then a playwright may congratulate himself on the fact that he has, without any doubt, written a piece which the public will flock to see.

To exemplify the manner in which even a rough outline of a play impresses one, I cannot, I think, do better than refer to *His House in Order*, which owes much of its popularity to the human note of sympathy it strikes and to the fact that it is true to life. To be sure, Mr. Pinero calls it a comedy, and so it is in the higher meaning of the word, since all life is either comedy or tragedy. But the author has been careful to keep the interest centred on the lighter side of the characters, while the real tragedy is over before the play begins.

That is how this particular play struck me from the first moment Mr. Pinero told me his story, and as the play developed act by act I felt convinced it would be a success, so great is its fidelity to life.

Another important point it is well to observe in serious plays is whether they deal with a problem in which the audience is likely to be interested. If a production arouses public curiosity, half the battle in theatrical management is won.

In recounting the various incidents in my average day, I have attached particular importance to the reading of plays, for the simple reason that the necessity of procuring good plays is obviously one of great moment to an actor-manager. I hope, too, in doing so that I may have, in some slight measure, wiped out the delusion which seemingly exists with regard to the manner in which a manager approaches plays from unknown authors submitted to him. I would add, by the by, that the number of serious men and women who, having achieved success in other walks of life, are taking to play-writing, is decidedly on the increase, and, of course, their very names demand immediate attention.

Rehearsals at the St. James's Theatre generally commence at eleven, and last until four, with a brief interval. As a general rule we commence with the bare stage, but over the orchestra a platform is built out, from which the author and I direct operations.

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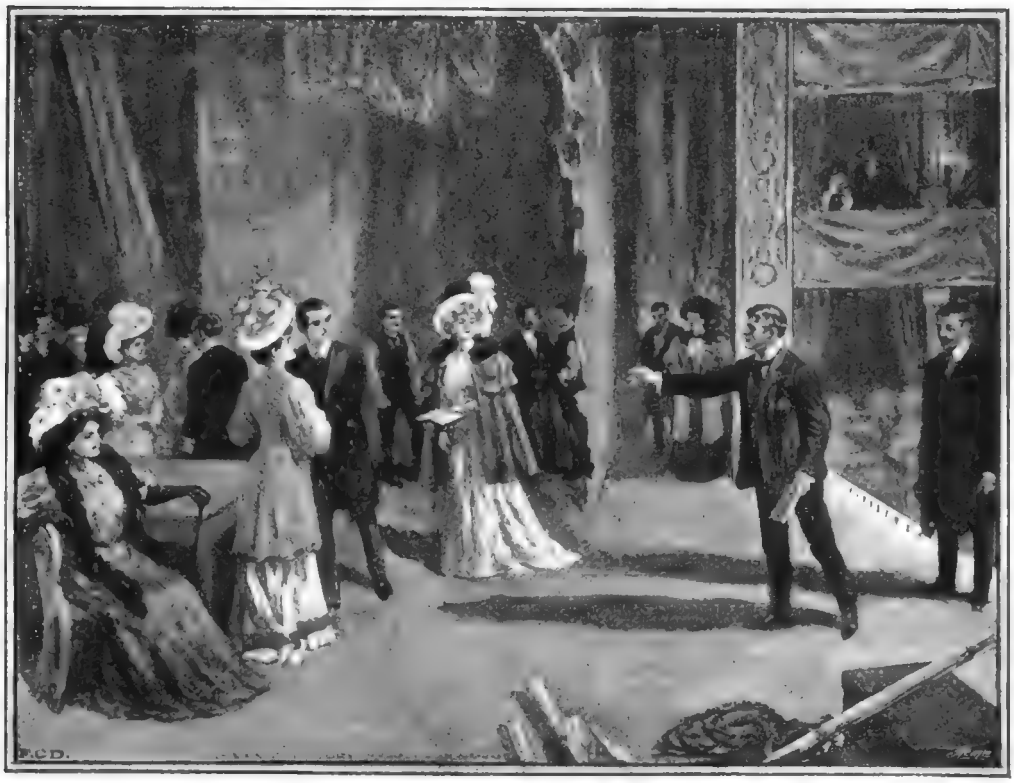

Rehearsals at the St. James's Theatre generally commence at eleven The author and I direct operations.

Needless to say, different authors have different methods in dealing with their work, and, as I have referred to *His House in Order* in particular among the plays I have produced, I would point out that Mr. Pinero arranges the position of the actors and actresses before he finally completes the manuscript.

I have always made it a rule, after producing a play, to have a complete record made of all the positions assumed by the artists in the various acts, and photographs of the actors and actresses are also preserved, so that should a revival take place some years later, the performance rarely differs essentially from the original.

Although my duties on the County Council have added considerably to my work—sometimes I am kept all day at the Council, and only arrive at the theatre a short time before I am due on the stage—I still make a practice of finding time during the day to study parts, and thus rarely, if ever, have I an idle moment.

After an early dinner it is time to drive to the theatre—even on *matinée* days I generally dine at home—for, in addition to so well-known a duty in an actor's life as "making up," when I arrive at my destination I invariably find that there are a number of matters calling for my personal attention.

And often during an evening I chat with as many as half-a-dozen would-be actors or actresses who have obtained introductions to me either through private or theatrical friends. As I have said, the number of would-be theatrical stars who feel they have had "a call" for the stage is appallingly large. Seemingly there is a glamour about acting; but it is the stage-struck public who see it, not the actor to whom the theatre is a business, very real, very serious, and often very trying. But those in front of the house see everything going so smoothly that they are somewhat naturally induced to believe that acting is the easiest thing in the world; they forget that a long training is necessary; they overlook the imagination, the keen perception, the self-obliteration, so to speak, which are so essential to the making of a real artiste.

Since I have left the theatre in the morning

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A little girl—she could not have been more than eleven or twelve—was ushered in. She carried in her hand a small bunch of sweet-scented violets.

too, my manager usually has news to report; plans also are discussed for the future; an account of the booking and state of the house is brought to me; friends, perhaps, look in to see me, while not infrequently I have received calls from most unexpected visitors. Talking of unexpected guests reminds me that, when I was playing in *The Prisoner of Zenda*, I was the recipient of a gift which touched me very much, and the remembrance of which I shall always cherish. During the interval I heard a quiet, nervous tap at my door, and a minute afterwards a little girl—she could not have been more than eleven or twelve—was ushered in. She carried in her hand a small bunch of sweet-scented violets, which she laid on my dressing-table, remarking, as she shyly looked up into my face: "Please, sir, will you have these—do please have these, because I liked to hear you talk so gallantly on the stage of your mother."

Then, without another word, my strange little visitor ran away, leaving me quite in ignorance as to her identity, for I was so much astonished that she was gone before I could find time to speak.

The evening's post-bag has then to be dealt with, in addition to the ordinary business of the theatre, and it is surprising what a number of curious appeals find their way into an actor-manager's letter-box. The autograph craze is, of course, as keen, if not keener, than ever it was, and the begging craze, like the poor, is always with us. There would seem to be an impression, too, that an actor-manager's salient ambition is to spend his spare time in training the actors of the future, so that when he is laid to rest people may be enabled to tell how he realised their worth at once, and how eagerly he seized the opportunity of making them his pupils there and then.

At any rate, the number of visits I have received from people of this sort is extraordinarily large, and if I were to grant interviews during the evening whenever asked I should not have time to go on the stage at all — indeed, the "interviewing" would sometimes continue far into the watches of the night.

Some of the applications which reach me from "dead heads" are also very curious. In my "museum," however, are a number of quite unique specimens from members of both sexes, which serve to show that many people apparently imagine that free passes should be doled out indiscriminately to all and sundry who take the trouble to apply for them.

The evening performance over does not necessarily mean that an actor-manager's day has come to an end as regards work, for often business compels him to remain at the theatre until close on midnight, when, unless he has social obligations to fulfil, he is only too glad to drive home and retire to bed. Still, despite the fact that in these days an actor-manager's time is very fully occupied—indeed, too fully occupied sometimes—there are, I think, many people who persist in retaining the belief that the few hours he is on the stage practically represent his day's work.

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HIS HOLIDAY

The Story of a Faithful Lover.

By W. B. M. Ferguson.

His fellow-clerks called him "Easy," and there was a legend to the effect that he had once been young. His name was Henry W. Trotty. He had been in the National Brokerage Company for twenty-five years, and somehow his salary had never increased in ratio with those years. But Trotty was never sensitive regarding his obvious lack of commercial genius, for he had earned his nick-name. He was the "easiest thing" the financial centre had seen in many a long day, and Throgmorton Street had shorn many lambs. But Throgmorton Street at first liked even while it secretly scorned, openly pitied.

It came to regard Trotty as a gentle imbecile thrown by a queer turn of fate among the hardest-headed, handed, and necessarily, hardest-hearted, men in the world. And the stories that are told of Trotty's softness are legion. The least among them is that once he had given the half of his small weekly salary to a notoriously unregenerate character begging for charity. And when taxed with the crime, Trotty only said: "I did not ask if he was good; only if he was hungry." That had happened long ago, when the legend regarding his youth had not been thought of, and he had since gone on committing crimes of a similar nature, but of less degree.

When Trotty had been with the National Brokerage Company for ten years a gradual change was noticed in him. His optimism was still as resilient, unfailing, as of old; his capacity for hard, unremitting toil as great. But his generosity seemed to have suffered a check. He was still the friend of every stray cat or stray human; but a strange foreign streak of parsimony had mingled with the warp and woof of his life.

"He's waking up. He may be a success yet," said his friends encouragingly. But parsimony, like everything, can be developed too much. As the years went on, and Trotty's ability to sit on a penny and see all around it developed commensurately, his co-workers did not take kindly to the change. They still called him "Easy," but now in irony. Stories were told of his parsimony as they had formerly been told of his criminal generosity—how he contrived to save in ways foreign to all decent-living men.

"And all for what?" asked Throgmorton Street complainingly. "He's not married, and has neither kith nor kin."

But despite Trotty's "waking up," he did not rise in the financial world. He had been born to serve, not to rule. And it was apparent that he viewed his position as but a means to an end. His attention was plainly concentrated on something outside of mere finance. What it was Throgmorton Street did not know.

"Of course, he's got some outside interest," they said wisely. "Probably salting his earnings away for a rainy day. He must have laid by a comfortable sum during all these years, living as he does. He's one of those freaks who can live in London within their income." They judged Trotty's home life by the standard tea and scone luncheon.

And then it leaked out what Trotty was saving for—a holiday. And "Trotty's holiday" became the stock joke of Throgmorton Street.

"Never had a holiday since you were a baby?" they asked. "Well, that's rough, Easy! Too bad your tastes are so expensive that you have to work day and night,

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year in, year out, to keep only yourself alive. And so, when you've saved enough, you're going on a regular orgy? What form will it take? A trip round the world in your private yacht? We'll all be there when it comes off. Don't forget us, Trotty." And Trotty had only smiled.

On the day that Trotty had completed his twenty-eighth year of service with the National Brokerage Company a long-expected crash convulsed Throgmorton Street. The bottom had dropped out of everything. It was rumoured that the National Brokerage was on the verge of collapse. Trotty was summoned to the private office of Mr. Crabbe, the senior member of the firm. It was an unexpected honour, and the old senior clerk brushed up his shiny clothes before entering. Mr. Crabbe opened fire without any preliminary skirmishing.

"Mr. Trotty, you know how things are with us?"

"Yes, sir," said Trotty, rubbing his veined hands, that even in the warmest weather looked frost-bitten.

"Well, this is a time for co-operation," said Mr. Crabbe grimly. "It is only a temporary flutter, and we are too firmly established to go under. But we require all our resources. The rest of our staff have stood with us nobly, helping as they can. We need all we can get. Now I ask if we can expect the same from you?"

"Yes, sir," said Trotty, his hands clasping and unclasping.

"Good," said Mr. Crabbe. "I expected as much from one of our oldest clerks. Now, I have no desire to inquire into your private affairs, Mr. Trotty, but I suppose that you can lend us at least two thousand in cash or in A 1 securities? That is only a drop in the bucket, but every little bit helps."

Trotty's face paled slowly. "I can't, sir," he said huskily.

"What?" said Mr. Crabbe.

"I—I thought you meant other kind of help, sir," said Trotty tremulously. "I—I will work without salary. I can't give you any financial aid, much as I would like to do so. All that I have is—is needed."

Mr. Crabbe eyed the trembling figure of the senior clerk. The eye intimated that the senior clerk was a perverter of truth. "Very well, Mr. Trotty," he said at length. "I was wrong to expect it, I suppose. Of course you know that we are necessarily cutting down our staff. I am sorry, but your services will no longer be required. I am forced into this unpleasant position by circumstances. I do not wish you to think that my request has any bearing on the question. Of course, it is needless to say that if you saw your way to having an interest in the firm things might be otherwise. As it is, I have no other alternative."

There was a finality about Mr. Crabbe's worried face that brooked no opposition. Trotty turned quietly away.

Thus, after twenty-eight years' faithful service, Trotty was turned adrift.

"Good enough for him," said Throgmorton Street, when they heard of what had happened. "He can take all the holiday he wants to now. He's got the means."

Trotty, as was his custom, walked the two miles home that night. His old green umbrella was clutched tightly in his trembling hand, and his smile was not in very good working order. The spring that propelled his optimistic machine seemed to have dislocated itself. The holiday he had planned and looked forward to all his life was but a week off.

Throgmorton Street had known that Trotty had never married, but it did not know that he had once figured in a romance—and romance costs infinitely more in every way than does marriage. Trotty did not believe in publishing a domestic newspaper. He was hopelessly old-fashioned in many ways. He believed that love was sacred—a thing apart.

And so, when the wonderful "only girl in the world" married someone else, Trotty had still thought of her as the only girl, and his friendship had been as unswerving, as loyal, as his overlooked love had been. And he had watched with a self-effacing joy the blessing of her union, which only he knew had cost him so much. And he had gloried when seven daughters had come to bear their father's name and perpetuate the memory of their mother.

But the world had not gone very well with the seven daughters. Their parents had died before the youngest child was five years of age, and money was as brief as the offers of a few distant relatives to care for them. And so Trotty had gladly jumped into the breach and lawfully constituted himself their guardian.

It takes something to bring up seven girls, but the senior clerk never once turned back, for love was with him.

One by one the seven daughters had grown up, educated, accomplished. One by one six of them had married, and strangely enough, not one had married wealth. Love

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had been the keynote of their home life. Occasionally wise neighbours had taken it on themselves to point out to Trotty the error of his ways.

"You should make your wards work," they said. "As soon as they are able they should go out and face the battle of life."

But the senior clerk had only squared his thin shoulders and flourished the old green umbrella in the face of the enemy.

"Never," he said. "I can provide for them all, and I count it a blessing."

"But you're worked to death," said the neighbours wisely.

"Hard work never yet killed anyone," said Trotty with a smile. "It's what you do between work. And it's not work, you know; it's a pleasure. Some day I'll take a holiday. On the day the youngest girl is married. Then I will need some distraction, for the house will be very, very lonely. Oh, yes, they will all marry."

Trotty's face paled slowly. "I can't, sir," he said, huskily.

Fathers thrice Trotty's size, ability, and egotism had agreed with the neighbours' advice, but Trotty heeded them not.

And that holiday he had spoken of was to take place a week from now, for Beth, the youngest girl, had become engaged some time ago. And Trotty had lost his position at the eleventh hour, and the funds in the bank were not very flourishing. The surplus that his friends had supposed had gone to swell a growing bank account had merely gone to the starting on an even footing with the world of the seven daughters of the wonderful "only girl."

The night of his dismissal from the Brokerage Company Trotty sat long into the early morning hours, confronting squarely and uncompromisingly the issue paramount. Beth was sleeping. She was hovering on the brink that divides the old life from the new. Perhaps the sorrow of leaving behind for

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ever girlhood and the home atmosphere serves to make the joy of mating only the more bitter sweet.

"But you'll come and live with us—Jack and me—won't you, daddy?" she had pleaded on the night she had confessed that Love the Master had entered her life. "It's not as if we will be living far away, like May and Ethel and the rest of the girls. We shall be close here in London. Won't you come?"

And Trotty, gently stroking her hair, had tenderly but firmly said "No."

And now, thinking it all over—"I can't let her know. I won't," said Trotty passionately to himself. "I must find another position. I must."

He thought long on ways and means, and necessity had taught him the mazes of contracted finance. By close shaving the sides of personal need he would have enough to provide Beth's trousseau and the incidental wedding expenses. After that it did not matter. He could live somehow, anyhow. Beth's marriage was the issue paramount. All else was as nothing compared with it.

The following morning, the next, and the next, Trotty left, ostensibly for business as usual, smiling and cheerful as ever. But his business was the most difficult in the world—finding work at sixty years of age and during a period of general financial depression. The old green umbrella wandered from office to office, gradually getting lower and lower in the scale.

There could be but one answer.

Some laughed at Trotty's years, some pitied, all refused. Trotty had his pride, but it went by the board during those days. Throgmorton Street would not believe in his necessity. Where was his money? What had he done with it? Only Trotty knew what his quest cost him.

Each night he returned to the little flat with no outward mark of the world's heel upon his soul. No hint that he was body-weary, heart-weary, showed in his face or manner. And when Beth took him to task about his appearance, saying that he was working too hard, Trotty would only smile.

One night he came home, unsuccessful as usual, and found another issue facing him—a greater issue. Four days had passed since his dismissal, days that even Trotty did not care to think of. But three days remained before his holiday—Beth's marriage.

Then had come the greater issue, and Trotty was face to face with despair. It was a letter from Jack Harding, who had married the sixth daughter. Trotty grew paler and paler as he read it. Sorrow, shame, were very near to the sixth daughter. Harding, in a fierce passion of self-loathing, humiliation, and contrition, confessed to Trotty that he had misappropriated a thousand pounds of his firm's funds, and had lost it all on the market. The only consolation the letter held were the facts that the sixth daughter did not know of her husband's shame, and that his firm, if the money were refunded within a week, would not prosecute.

That Harding, in his hour of agony, turned to Trotty, was not to be wondered at. And there was nothing of anger or contempt in Trotty's heart. He had a great sympathy with youth. He understood it—its temptations, its failures, its triumphs. Harding had been one of his favourites. He knew that a slip often occurs in the best as in the worst lives, only the world always does not know of it. Harding was one to whom help would not be given in vain. And then there was the sixth daughter. And there were the other five—and Beth. Aside from all other reasons, disgrace must not touch them.

In his room that night Trotty faced this greater issue as only a few nights ago he had faced a lesser one—calmly, dispassionately, with no tinge of hysteria in his reasoning. Extraneous help was dismissed at once. No, there could be no outside help. A thousand pounds. The money *must* be paid before the week had elapsed, or some binding promise given. And there could be no outside help.

Trotty had found but one answer to the question paramount. Put in sympathetic English, he had decided to commit suicide. His life insurance for a thousand pounds was the help Harding required, the only help he could give. There was no other way. He had reasoned it all out carefully. And he gave it gladly. For the six daughters' sake, for Beth's sake, for Harding's sake, and for the sake of the wonderful "only girl in the world." After all, what was it? His race was run. Beth married, he would have nothing to live for. There was no alternative.

Confronting the infinite necessitates a steady eye born of a pure heart. Trotty faced it unflinchingly. There was no bravado, no bathos, in his attitude. He had estimated to the full the crime he had decided upon. And that it was a crime he fully understood. There must be no mistake, for suicide is a greater disgrace than embezzlement.

For a long time he had been troubled with

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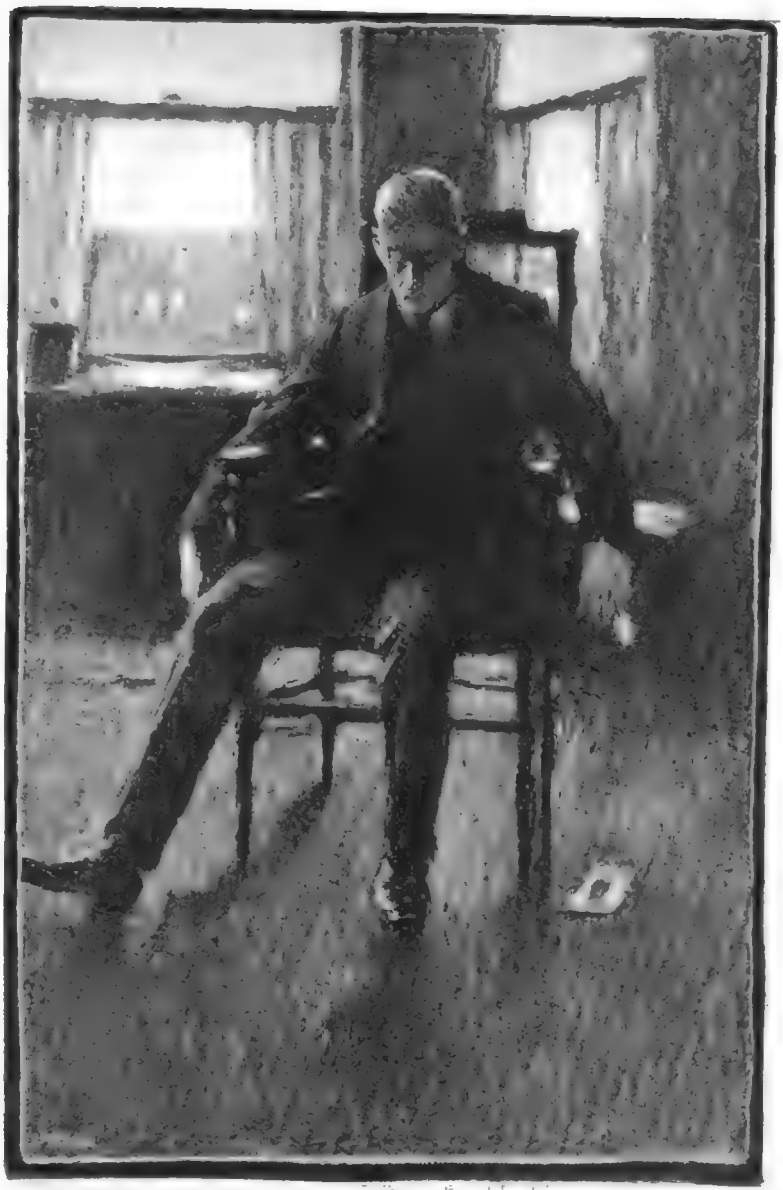
his heart, and had been in the habit of occasionally taking strychnine tablets as a stimulant. It would be very easy to take an overdose by mistake. Very easy indeed.

The first step was to make Harding the beneficiary in his policy. The company he was insured with was old and trustworthy. He had paid his premiums faithfully for years. The company would pay promptly and without cavil.

He had intended the thousand pounds to be divided between the seven daughters, but now a greater necessity had arisen. There would be enough left to start Harding afresh. His next step was to write to Harding's firm, assuring them of the ultimate settlement of their loss. Then Trotty bent every effort to make Beth's marriage a success.



His old, white head fell forward upon his breast.

And Beth's marriage was a success. As many of the six daughters who could came on with their husbands for the event. It was a gala day, and even the neighbours were *en fête*. Nothing that love and money could supply had been omitted. And Trotty was the gayest of them all. It was the culminating point in his existence. The finishing touch had been put on his life's work. No, there remained one other. But that would do to-morrow.

As the guests lingered over the farewell supper in the dining-room, Trotty slipped away unnoticed to his room. He was feeling very strange. It suddenly seemed as if he had come out of a very long illness. He felt curiously weak. Now that Beth was married the last prop seemed to have fallen from his life. The stimulant had vanished. His heart was fluttering, beating against his breast like some bird battling for freedom.

His years, his overdrawn energy, the excitement—all had risen up suddenly to take their toll, and would not be denied. Hope, necessity, were not there to battle against

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them as they had done in the old days. And his heart—— Why would it persist in racing like an engine by fits and starts, and then throb away to a mere half beat? It was all so very queer.

He went unsteadily to a small desk that stood between the windows, and unlocked a drawer. No, he would not take any strychnine just yet. Somehow the drug had taken on the shape of a huge denunciation during the past day. Instead, he unlocked another drawer, and brought out an old photograph, faded to a discreet yellow. In the gathering twilight he scanned it with loving near-sighted eyes, and then kissed it reverently. A burst of merriment came from the dining-room, and someone started to play the wedding march. Trotty smiled.

He remembered the day when the "only girl in the world" had had the photograph taken. She was then just Beth's age, and, indeed, this seventh daughter was more like her than any of the others. Trotty wondered if he loved her more than he did any of the others. It was hard to say, for now that Harding was in trouble it seemed to him that the sixth daughter was the one to be cherished more than all. The old photograph smiled up at him through the years, and seemed to say, "I've been watching all that you've done for my girls. Nothing has escaped me; nothing is forgotten."

Trotty wondered, now that he had come to the end of the road, what his long life would have been like if these seven little women had not been in it. What would it have been like if the "only girl in the world" and he had carried out their little romance to the end; if there had been for her and him, as there was this very minute for Beth, the chords of a wedding march and the tinkling of wedding merriment?

But such thoughts belonged to that day of long ago, when the photograph in his hand had not been a discreet yellow. He had done his best. He would do the one thing left, and if after that the price of his old love was not paid, somewhere, somehow, out in eternity he would know it.

"Dear," he whispered, bending over the old photograph, "dear, Beth is just married—the last one. They are all happy. And it will be all right with Jack—" A sudden spasm of pain gripped at his heart, and he groped blindly to a chair. In a flash a great understanding broke upon him like a brilliant light. God had understood. His old, white head fell forward upon his breast. Trotty had gone, unsullied, on his long-expected holiday.

GRANNY'S BEST CHINA.

Granny's best china is patterned with roses
And, though tea-pot and milk-jug have both sprung a leak
And the latter is minus a spout, she supposes
Its equal, in vain, far and wide you might seek.

Though more than one tea-cup is short of a handle,
And one or two saucers are missing beside,
No modern day set can, she swears, hold a candle
To the rose-patterned china she bought as a bride.

And though other tea-sets both newer and finer,
Dear Granny, in course of time, may have possessed,
In her faithful eyes the old rose-patterned china
She bought in her youth, will be always "the best."

A. L. H.

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Picture Paragraphs

The Editor is Always Pleased to Purchase Photographs Suitable for Use in this Feature. All Photographs should be Accompanied by a Short Description.

Photo *Gribayédoff*

During the war, Japanese soldiers used to bury long Chinese jars and build a furnace under them in order to be able to heat water for a bath.

THE WORLD'S CLEANEST SOLDIERS.

THE Japanese soldier considers it a disgrace to be dirty. Soldiers of other nationalities are not always over particular, but, as Mr. Kipling has sung:

> Oh, East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet.

However, the Japanese military man is not provided by a grateful and beneficent government with a portable bath, so when on active service he has to set his wits to work in order to obtain the necessary adjuncts to his ablutions.

The Chinese, for reasons of their own, manufacture long and large jars, whose diameter is that of a western main drain. It occurred to a bright Japanese that one might just as well have a bath standing up as lying down.

Accordingly he and his comrades interred a jar, built a furnace beneath it, and filled it with water. Soon a boiling hot bath bubbled before them. Imitators sprang into being, and subsequently into similar baths.

In modern warfare, initiative and self-reliance count for everything. All officers agree that the development of individuality and the habit of thinking for themselves among the men is of paramount importance.

Of course, a dull, stupid soldier would have approached his company officer, and said: "Please, sir, how can I get a bath?" and the officer would naturally have replied: "My dear man, I haven't the least idea in the world."

Not so the intelligent Japanese. He thought for himself. By so doing he obtained the much-needed and long-desired wash, which otherwise he might have lacked.

A PETRIFIED FISH.

THIS extraordinary petrified fish which has been set up in Wurtemburg as a memorial to William I., German Emperor and King of Prussia, dates from prehistoric times. It is twelve feet long, exclusive of the head, which has not been discovered. The diameter of the throat is six and a half feet.

Altogether, it makes a very picturesque and unconventional addition to the adornments of the city of Wurtemburg.

Photo *Richard Fuchs.*

A petrified fish, twelve feet high, erected in Wurtemburg as a memorial to William I., German Emperor and King of Prussia.

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From a Sketch by H. E. Tautz.

A remarkable series of heads sketched in a circle. Much patience and .o little skill is required to execute such a drawing.

A MAGIC CIRCLE.

Turn The Page About As You May, You Cannot Avoid the Eyes of Some of the Heads.

This ingenious sketch by Mr. H. E. Tautz has an almost uncanny property; do what you will, you cannot get away from the eyes of all the heads. Reverse it, turn it sideways, it is all the same; at least one face among the many stares the beholder out of countenance.

To achieve a sketch of this kind is one of the many things which appear much easier than they are in reality. It is best to start in the centre, and gradually pile up more and more faces round the initial head; but no small difficulty will be met with in filling up the interstices. Another point is that for the sake of variety all the heads must not face the same way.

Drawing circles full of heads is a fascinating pastime, that might well replace book teas and similar delights. Not the least attractive part of the game is to make someone count the heads after the drawing is completed. Even the artist himself does not know how many heads there are in the above sketch.

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Photo *H. R. Fitch, Cal.*

The "Tent City" on the Coronada Peninsula, Southern California. On one side is San Diego Bay, and on the other the Pacific Ocean. Over a thousand holiday-makers reside here in tents during the summer.

LIVING OUT OF DOORS.

The Simple Life in America.

What is probably the most novel holiday resort in the world is that known as Tent City. It is situated on the Coronada Peninsula in far away Southern California. On one side it is washed by the placid waters of San Diego Bay and on the other by the restless waters of the Pacific Ocean.

Here, during the summer season, over a thousand holiday-makers reside in the most delightful tents imaginable. They are of all sizes, comfortably furnished, lit with electric light, and boasting their own telephone. In addition to the ordinary canvas tents there are some charming bijou residences erected of bamboo and thatched with thick Californian grass. The city is run by a private company, who certainly do their best to make visitors feel at home.

In the centre of the town there is a large restaurant, and among the attractions a floating casino, and a concert hall, not to mention boating and fishing. The tents may be rented from as low as two shillings per day.

Another celebrated American summer camp is the Street Car Colony at Mountainville, some three hours' railway journey from the City of New York. Some time ago, when the Metropolitan Street Tramways electrified their system, the Downtown Ethical Society—a New York charitable institution—purchased these cars, conveyed them to Mountainville, and transformed them into a cosy camp.

Fifteen of the cars have their own little sitting-room and bedroom. Two of the others have been transformed into dining-rooms, another into a kitchen, and still another into a hospital. The society which owns and runs this novel colony sends down a different party of young women every week to enjoy an inexpensive holiday.

The Street Car Colony at Mountainville, near New York City. A charitable institution bought the cars and formed a camp with them. The society sends down City girls to the camp, enabling them to enjoy an ideal holiday at little cost.

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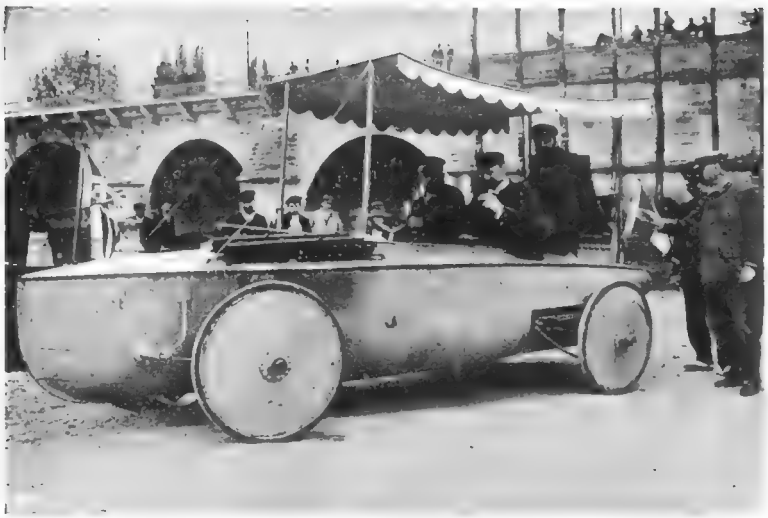

A new automobile that is either a boat or a land car at will. This illustration shows it ashore——

AN AMPHIBIOUS CONVEYANCE.

A New Automobile for Work Afloat and Ashore.

The motto of the Royal Marines, *terra marique*, might well be inscribed in large letters on this automobile, which certainly comes into the category of "all that travel by land or by water." For, although running delightfully and without a hitch on land, it is equally ready to perform the functions of a boat should water be encountered, the only preparations required being a few mechanical connections.

The hull is made of steel plates riveted to steel ribs. The axles pass through watertight tubes which traverse the hull. The automobile has three forward and one backward speed, and can do 21¾ miles an hour on land and 5·6 on water.

The boat enters and leaves the water simply by descending and climbing the river bank, under the impulse of its driving wheels. It the bank is too steep to climb, that is, has a gradient of more than 15 per cent., a stake is driven into the ground, and a rope passed round it. The boat is provided with a capstan, and by means of this and the rope the vessel is hauled up the bank.

It is the invention of a Frenchman, M. T. Ravaillier, and the official tests recently made in the presence of the French Minister of Public Works were a triumphant success.

Motorists to whom breakdowns are a sad and constant occurrence will be pleased to learn that the Ravaillier automobile carries an anchor, a life-buoy, and a pair of removable rowlocks in case of an accident to the motor. The Ravaillier conveyance seems to fit in admirably with the needs of honeymoon couples, explorers, expeditions to the North Pole, and other daring and rash individuals who wish to travel in strange lands remote from civilisation.

Photos *Branger, Paris.*

——and this one afloat, and proceeding on a voyage down the River Seine.

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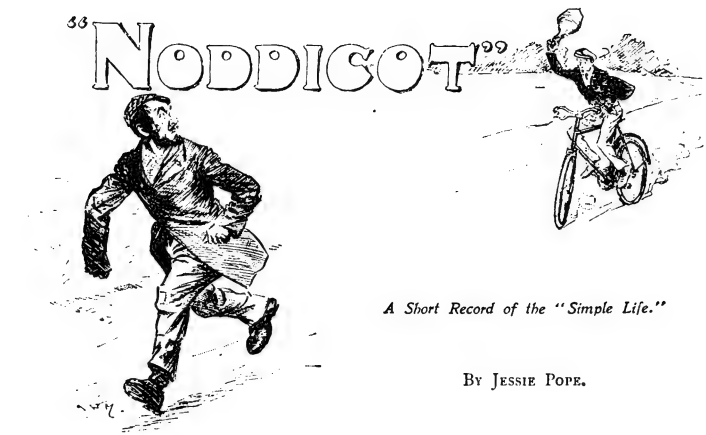

A Short Record of the "Simple Life."

By Jessie Pope.

"What does the old nuisance want now?" said Mr. Harrison Noddy, picking up the letter by his plate addressed in a cramped feminine hand.

"Which old nuisance?" said Mrs. Noddy, languidly helping herself to coffee, and it was evident from her tone she thought their acquaintance boasted several.

"Aunt Camilla," he replied, "wants to know when I'm going to 'burn my daubs and do some honest work,' as usual, I suppose. Hullo!" he exclaimed, as he looked down the first page—"this takes it—she's going to give us a wedding present after all. Listen:

Dear Godson and Nephew,

On the occasion of your marriage a year ago you will remember I gave you some sound advice, with the suggestion of something more substantial to follow. The late tenants of my small furnished bung-low, "Noddicot," having removed to the neighbouring town of Bumpstead, I now beg to offer you the cottage as a rural residence. It will, you must remember, offer none of the dissipations or luxuries of your present London life, being a simple but sufficient retreat for those who love to be at home with nature in the heart of the country. There is no accommodation for servants unless you like to run up a lean-to at the back; but there is a bath and water laid on, which you will have to pump up through the pipes every morning, an exertion I hardly think you will feel capable of. Your young wife also would have to attend to your wants, and I fear she will scarcely welcome such a task unless she is more dome-ticated than she looks. If you like the idea you can go down for a short trial visit, at the end of which I shall neither be surprised nor offended if you return the cottage to me, with or without thanks.

Yours sincerely,

Camilla Noddy.

"She doesn't want us to have it, the mean old thing," exclaimed Mrs. Noddy, whose colour had risen at the allusion to herself; "but she thinks the offer of it will do instead of a wedding present. Let's take it, Harrison, just to spite her. I don't see how she can expect one to look domesticated in white satin and orange blossom!"

"She evidently doesn't think me man enough to do the pumping," said Mr. Noddy grimly.

"Fancy a lean-to for cook and Parker," cried his wife with a sudden giggle.

Mr. Noddy laughed boisterously, and Nipper the dog, welcoming the sound of merriment, began to bark and skirmish madly round the room with the slipper his master had kicked off at him to keep him quiet.

"Very well," said Mr. Noddy, "let's shut up the house, take our oldest clothes, and see how we like the simple life. You can play at being cook, and I can get some new backgrounds for my pictures."

Mr. Noddy was such a mild-looking young man, that his bloodthirsty taste in art was quite unexpected. He revelled in raking up the dark scenes of history, and covered large canvases with murderous episodes, which, though originally intended for the Academy,

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generally finished up by being presented to some unfortunate friend on the occasion of his marriage.

"But what about the servants?" said Mrs. Noddy.

"Oh, sack the servants," said her husband lightly. Mrs. Noddy's blue eyes grew saucer-like with rapture.

"It would be the proudest moment of my life," she exclaimed, "to go into my own kitchen without knocking and sack cook and Parker for two lazy, ill-tempered, incapable creatures; at the same I think I'll only give them a week's holiday till we see how we like it."

"You *can* cook, I suppose?" said Mr. Noddy. "You're always saying you would like to go down into the kitchen and tell cook how things ought to be done."

"Don't you worry about that," said Mrs. Noddy, sticking out her rather obstinate little chin. "You look after your pumping and painting, my boy, and leave the cooking to me. Why, we had 'domestic economy' classes twice a week at school, so I ought to know all about it."

"But what about old Nipper?" said Mr. Noddy. Nipper pricked up his ears and looked at them both out of his loving mongrel eyes, for he *was* a mongrel, though they had given three guineas for him as a pedigree Airedale. "Will you come with us to Noddicot, old boy, and pig it?"

"It *won't* be pigging," said Mrs. Noddy; "it will be Paradise!"

And really Mr. Noddy was inclined to agree with her when he rose early, the morning after their arrival, and looked out of the window. The cottage itself was pretty as a picture, roses climbing to the roof, jessamine framing the windows, while a wooden table fixed among the larkspurs and snapdragons in the garden showed that the previous tenants were fond of al fresco repasts. The wide downs stretching all round were studded with sunny clumps of gorse, and the fresh dewy fragrance of the morning made him feel that a cold bath (he usually took his tepid) would put him quite in tune with his surroundings. As he made his way to the bathroom his heart rose in anticipation of many simple and beautiful pleasures, and he had forgotten all about the pumping until he turned the bath tap and found no water came. Amused rather than amazed at the discovery, he slipped into his oldest flannels, and was soon turning the crank in the back kitchen with all the lighthearted energy of a boy. Through the kitchen window, as he worked, he could see a little dell cleft in the downs, with a clear amber stream hustling among the grey boulders at the bottom.

"Just the spot for the death of William II.!" he exclaimed, and postponing his bath he dropped the crank handle, and went out to explore further. The dell widened into a valley and the stream into a rivulet, and the idea in Mr. Noddy's brain also expanded from a single-handed assassination to the massacre of Killiecrankie, and so absorbed was he in jotting down suitable positions for his dead and dying and a memo. to send to town for more red paint—for the scene would be a gory one—that he was surprised to find he had been out an hour, and hastened back to Noddicot and breakfast. No smell of bacon frying, however, greeted him, but Nipper ran out as he approached, looking wet about the feet and a little depressed, and next moment he caught sight of his wife on her hands and knees in the passage with her sleeves rolled up and a pail beside her.

"Hullo—spring cleaning already!" he cried jocosely.

Mrs. Noddy, who, as a rule, had a captivating face and a charming smile, had her black looks, like other people, and now she turned on him with the expression he was used to when he trod on her train or contradicted her in public.

"Come and help mop it up!" she moaned—and then he saw the passage was all in a swim, and small rivulets were running down the stairs.

"By Jove!" cried Mr. Noddy, "has a pipe burst?"

"No—only your bath run over," she replied with bitter irony. "Please turn the tap off another time before you pump the water up."

"Oh—no more I did," he exclaimed, stricken with remorse, and showed such desperate energy in mopping, even though in his blind haste he took her dressing-gown to do it with, that Mrs. Noddy was mollified, and left him at it while she went to prepare breakfast.

The eggs were so new laid that they tasted a trifle insipid to their town-bred palates. They missed that subtle flavour they were accustomed to, which pepper and salt could not supply—but the coffee was strong enough for both; in fact, by some means Mrs. Noddy could not explain, the grounds would not keep in their proper place, and the result was so puddingy that Mr. Noddy made the doubtful joke of trying to eat it with a spoon. But the bi-weekly visit of the butcher saved the

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situation. He had brought them a huge leg of mutton, and harmony was restored as they discussed the question of roasting or boiling, and decided on the latter—with onion sauce.

"Shall I stay and help you with it, old lady?" said Mr. Noddy.

"Oh dear no!" replied his wife. "You've done enough mischief for one day. Go on with your picture, but leave me Nipper in case of tramps."

No tramps appeared, but Nipper had quite a bright morning with his mistress in the kitchen. He hated that part when the milk boiled over on him, but liked the episode when she dropped the mutton, baking tin and all, on the floor, because it meant a rich lick for him. He was sorry for her when she burnt her hand on the stove, but annoyed when he got smacked because she tripped over him and sent the butter she was carrying into the ashpan.

"Come and help mop it up!" she moaned.

However, dinner was ready by one o'clock, and with flushed face and anxious eyes Mrs. Noddy watched her husband lift the cover.

"Hullo! you *did* boil it after all, then?" he exclaimed at the sight of the huge pallid thing before him.

"No—I roasted it," she replied. "But it wouldn't get brown somehow. I think it must be fresh killed."

Mr. Noddy plunged the knife in.

"I'm afraid it isn't done, dear," he said gently.

"Oh—that's all right," she replied, in a hard, lofty tone, playing a desperate game of bluff—"that's only the gravy in it."

"Well, I've had all *I* want of it, anyhow," he returned, with the sudden anger of disappointed appetite. "Will you help yourself? It sickens me to look at it."

Mrs. Noddy stretched forth a small blistered hand and took the dish without a word. Then her obstinate little chin began to pucker, and the two great tragic tears that dropped with a splash on her plate brought her penitent husband to her side. For a moment she repelled his advances, then the burden of her failure and her fatigue was too great, and she wept on his shoulder.

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They dined peaceably on eggs and potatoes, which Mr. Noddy declared a very proper fare for the simple life—the mutton was a tabooed subject, but it apparently gave Mr. Noddy food for *thought*, anyhow, for when he had gone out Mrs. Noddy found the cookery book lying open by his chair at the page devoted to "Mutton Rechauffés," and he had put pencilled ticks against "Mutton Croquettes" and "Mutton à la Sauce Piquante." Mrs. Noddy breathed hard as she read them through—they were beyond her—but to confess it was to admit inefficiency, and she sank desperately into the empty chair, feeling that the simple life was a bit too complicated for her. A click at the gate, a snarl and scuffle in the garden distracted her attention from her miseries, and she saw a tramp kicking at Nipper, who had torn another hole in his already tattered trouser leg. Mrs. Noddy's brain acted quickly. She hurried into the kitchen, glanced through the window at the dell where her husband's easel was still standing, whisked into the larder, and before the tramp could whine out his grievance, planked the leg of mutton into his arms. He was a shrewd man, and he gathered that she wanted him to take the mutton and *go*, and he went, and with a light heart. Mrs. Noddy watched him safely over the brow of the hill—with a large bulge on one side of his coat. She had got rid of the mutton rechauffé nightmare, and the world was a different place already, and she snoozed back in the big cushioned chair to rest till tea from her labours of the morning. She was awakened by her husband bursting in at the door, exclaiming in a tone of great relief:

"Thank goodness you're safe! I thought the brute might have gone for you before he made off with this—" And he dropped the mutton on the table before her horrified gaze. "I suppose he sneaked in while you were out of the way. I met him as I came back by the road. He seemed inclined to show fight at first, but I bowled him over in the gorse and took possession, and except that I don't like leaving you, I ought to ride over to Bumpstead and set the police after him."

"He'll set the police after *you*, you mean, for robbery with violence on the high road," cried his exasperated wife. "That mutton is *his*. I gave it to him."

"What the dickens for?" gasped Mr. Noddy.

"Well, you said you never wanted to see it again."

"Neither did I in that condition, but there are plenty of ways of doing it up."

"Are there?" said his wife innocently. "Well, you see, I took you at your word; besides, Nipper went for him and tore his trousers, so I had to give him something rather substantial."

Mr. Noddy gave a harsh laugh.

"Bravo, Nipper!" he said. "Nipper seems to be the only one who showed any sense at all."

"Perhaps he is," said Mrs. Noddy; "but my honour is at stake anyhow, and you've got to ride after the tramp and give the mutton back to him."

At first Mr. Noddy treated the idea with utter scorn; then he argued, then he expostulated, then he saw tears welling up in the blue eyes again, and, conquered as usual, tied the leg of mutton to his lamp bracket, and with a frowning brow, bicycled over the hill again after the tramp.

It was during his absence that Mrs. Noddy heard voices in the front garden and a knock at the open front door, and peeping through the window saw three bicyclists—a gentleman and two ladies.

Suddenly conscious of her disreputable appearance (she was wearing an old skirt and blouse and a sunbonnet, which, however, had not prevented the sunburn settling particularly on her nose), she tried to slip into her bedroom to tittivate, when the man put his head in at the door and caught sight of her.

"Can you get us a meal, my good woman?" he said, "and as quickly as possible," and the ladies, who had sat down at the table among the snapdragons, smiled at her with patronising encouragement. Mrs. Noddy blushed hotly.

"No," she replied. "I'm sorry I can't."

"Oh, you mustn't say that," he exclaimed with a bumptious geniality. "We're famishing and five miles from anywhere, don't you know."

"You can't have anything here," replied Mrs. Noddy, whose face had gone quite pale again, except her nose.

"But we'll take pot luck with you," he cried aggressively. "We're not in a position to be very particular. What have you got?"

"Nothing," said Mrs. Noddy.

"Oh, but that's absurd," said one of the ladies. "You must have something in the house."

"The other woman who lived here before used to give us a very nice tea," said her companion, and both looked fiercely at her.

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"We'll pay you well for it," said the man. "Now, my dear creature, don't be so hard-hearted, but bustle about and get us something to eat and drink."

"This is a private residence," said Mrs. Noddy, trembling with anger, and she closed the door in their faces.

She hastened to her husband for sympathy on his return from conciliating the tramp; but he seemed to think it was her own fault.

"You shouldn't have permitted any discussion," he said. "If you'd been firm from the start they would never have bothered you about it all."

It was with great bitterness that Mrs. Noddy recalled his words the next day.

They had bicycled to Bumpstead to order provisions, and had brought back with them something substantial for tea, for the egg and milk diet was beginning to pall. The something substantial consisted of a pigeon pie, cakes, fruit, and cream, and they promised themselves the most interesting meal they had had since their arrival at Noddicot. Mrs. Noddy looked quite proudly at the table daintily laid with her own fair fingers. All was ready; she had made the tea, and was about to call her husband in from the garden when she remembered there were some watercresses in the stream at the back and went to gather them as a final addition to the feast.

While she was busy bending over the rushing water, Mr. Noddy approached with a perturbed, not to say sheepish, expression on his face.

"I say," he began, "there's a lady with her little boy down at the cottage; they want to know if we can give them some tea. They're bicycling and very hot, and she says the last people——"

"Well, *we* can't give them tea," interrupted Mrs. Noddy; "you know that."

"Of course we can't; but I thought you'd better tell them, as it's a lady."

"Oh, you poor noodle!" ejaculated his wife. "Where are they?"

"I asked them in, as it was so hot outside."

Mrs Noddy finished washing the watercress in the stream and went back to the cottage. As she approached the sitting-room she heard merry voices and the tinkle of china, and opening the door stood appalled at the sight before her, for seated at the table drinking tea, eating pigeon pie, cakes, fruit cream, sat a good-looking lady and a good sized boy.

"Thanks," said the lady, "but we shan't want any watercresses."

"What are you doing?" cried Mrs. Noddy in an awful voice. "That's not your tea."

"Dear me!" said the astonished lady, putting down her teacup, "I thought it was. The man said he'd see, then he came back and asked us in here, so of course I thought it was meant for us."

"There has been a mistake," said Mrs. Noddy. "This is a private house; we do not provide entertainment for passers-by."

"But I'm truly sorry," said the lady, "and I'm afraid we've nearly finished, we were so hungry. What shall we do? Whom shall we pay?"

Mrs. Noddy smiled quite serenely.

"You can pay 'the man,'" she said. "I'll call him in, if you'll excuse me."

"Harrison," she said, looking in at the kitchen, where her husband stood fidgeting about with a perplexed and hang-dog expression on his face, "the lady in there wants to speak to you." Then she went into her bedroom, shut the door, and hid her face in the pillow.

Ten minutes later he found her there.

"They've gone," he said, "and she's going to put something in the Bumpstead poor-box. She sent her sincere apologies to you. I oughtn't to have asked them in, but I never thought they'd start wolfing the tea. But, I say, don't take it to heart so, old lady."

"Oh, I'm not," said Mrs. Noddy wearily, "but I've had enough of Noddicot. I want to go home, Harrison."

"Very well," said Mr. Noddy. "We'll go home to-morrow. Hullo! here's the postman. I'll just see what he's brought."

It was a letter, addressed in a cramped feminine hand.

DEAR NEPHEW AND GODSON (it ran),

I am glad you have had the courage to accept my present, and rejoice to hear your announcement that you *are* man enough to do the pumping, and that your wife's domesticity is equal to all requirements. I am staying near Bumpstead, with my dear friend Sarah Proctor, and we propose lunching with you to-morrow, if convenient

Yours sincerely,

CAMILLA NODDY.

"I'll write and tell the old nuisance it's *not* convenient," said her nephew and godson.

But Mrs. Noddy sat upright, and stuck out her obstinate little chin.

"No, you won't," she said. "You'll write and tell her we shall be delighted to see them. She's coming to pick my housekeeping to pieces, and to find flaws and imperfections in all my arrangements, and, look here, Harrison, I'll forgive you everything if you'll help me in making her think there aren't any."

The bargain was sealed in the usual way, and over a fresh pot of tea and the remains

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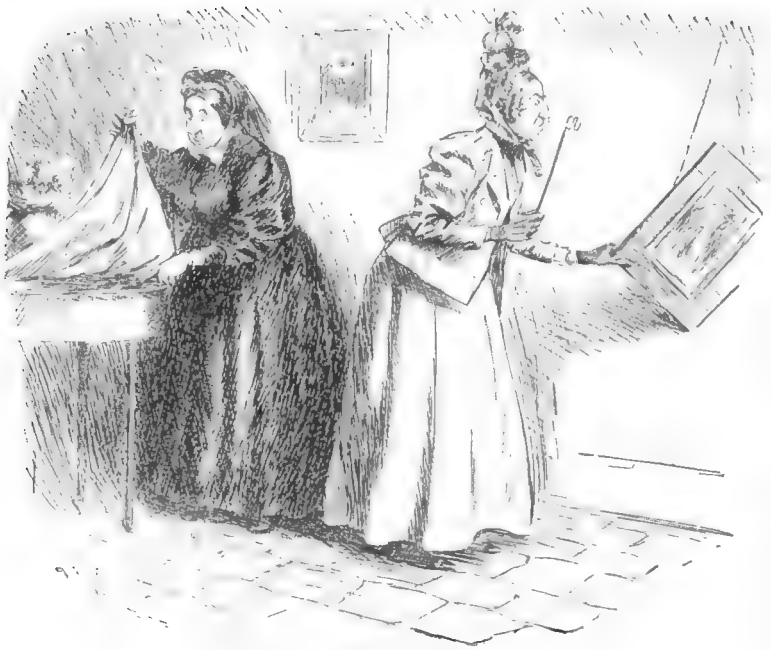

They pried and poked everywhere.

of the pigeon-pie they laid deep schemes for the reception, not to say *deception*, of Aunt Camilla.

"There's one thing we *must* do," said Mr. Noddy finally. "We must feed them well, for they're both fond of their grub."

The next morning dawned fresh and fair, and at ten o'clock a cart, bearing the inscription, "Cook, Caterer, Bumpstead," set down at Noddicot garden gate a man, a woman, a large basket-crate, and several parcels.

Mrs. Noddy received them with an air of suppressed excitement, which changed to triumphant satisfaction when the man put on his white sleeves and apron, and set to work in the kitchen; while the woman, armed with pail, soap, flannel, and polishing cloths, transformed the rather dishevelled interior of Noddicot into a picture of sweet-smelling neatness and cleanliness.

Mr. Noddy worked feverishly at tidying up the garden, while Mrs. Noddy put flowers in everything she could find to hold them, and arrayed herself in white muslin to complete the picture, rapturously sniffing the delicate but savoury odours which issued from the kitchen department and wasted themselves on the moorland air.

At a quarter to one there was nothing in the sight of a plainly-dressed man and woman walking towards Bumpstead to arouse the suspicions of Aunt Camilla and Miss Proctor, as they drove towards Noddicot, but a shade of annoyance crossed Aunt Camilla's face as she caught sight of their daintily-dressed young hostess waiting for them in the garden and playing with the dog to pass the time.

"Humph! That means cold lunch, I expect," she said to Miss Proctor, who jerked up her sharp chin in aggrieved assent.

"Too much of a doll to be domesticated," she murmured—and both sighed "Poor Harrison" in chorus.

The "doll" received them kindly and cordially, pointed to where her husband was painting in the dell, whistled to him to come, and then said, with a charming smile:

"Now, auntie, you'd like to look about the cottage, I know—while I dish up the lunch—it will be ready in two minutes."

They pried and poked everywhere. Aunt Camilla ran her fingers along the tops of the skirting-boards, while Miss Proctor looked for cobwebs behind the pictures, and not only did the absolute order and cleanliness they found leave a grim, disappointed look on their faces, but the sight of the pretty little niece-in-law, radiantly busy among the kitchen pots and pans, only seemed to add to their dejection. Still they enjoyed their lunch in spite of themselves, for the fish was excellent, the chicken tender and done to a turn, and the sweets and savoury so good that both ladies had two helpings.

After lunch Mr. Noddy went to the dell for an hour to catch a sunlight effect, and Mrs. Noddy excused herself to clear up in the kitchen; but as that process consisted only of emptying the plates and dishes into the basket-crate for removal the next day, she felt her almost immediate return would seem unnatural, so retired to smoke a cigarette in the arbour at the back.

It was during her absence that the following conversation took place between the two guests.

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"You were foolish to risk even the offer of it. You never know what young people are equal to nowadays," said Miss Proctor.

"But how was I to guess that such a useless be-furbelowed little piece of goods would be such an excellent cook and manager?" snapped Aunt Camilla.

"Well, put it to them—tell them about your doctor's orders, and offer them a substitute. You should have given them a bridge-box, as I suggested, when they got married. It will cost you a lot more now."

"I don't mind what it costs me," said Aunt Camilla. "Sshh—she's coming."

It was while they were drinking early afternoon tea—the table having been duly prepared by the professional gentleman in the morning—that Aunt Camilla brought the conversation round to the matter of soil.

"What soil is this, Harrison?" she said.

"Gravel and ironstone, I should say," replied Mr. Noddy.

"There!" said Miss Proctor. "Just what the doctor said."

"The doctor tells me if I lived for six months on ironstone," said Aunt Camilla—as if it were a diet—"that I should get rid of this dreadful rheumatism."

"Well, I wish we could put you up, aunt," said Mr. Noddy, "but you see the accommodation is strictly limited."

"Yes, you could not do that; but there is another alternative. You find it fairly easy to manage a little place like this, don't you?" she said, turning to Mrs. Noddy.

"Easy isn't the word," said Mrs. Noddy—which was true.

"Well, I wondered, my dears, if you would be willing to give me my cottage back again. Miss Proctor would come with me, and if I stayed here during the summer I might be completely cured."

Mrs. Noddy dropped her eyes, lest they should reveal her feelings, and Mr. Noddy was, for the moment, also struck dumb.

"I should, of course, give you a substantial substitute. I thought, Harrison, if you cared, for instance, for a motor-car like your brother Edward's, I should be glad to write you a cheque for the amount. What do *you* say, my dear?" she said, turning to Mrs. Noddy.

Mrs. Noddy raised her eyes and replied with a tender and solicitous smile: "As it is a question of your health, auntie, I am sure both Harrison and I will be quite willing to consent to your suggestion. In fact, we will move out as soon as you wish."

"That's very good of you," said Aunt Camilla.

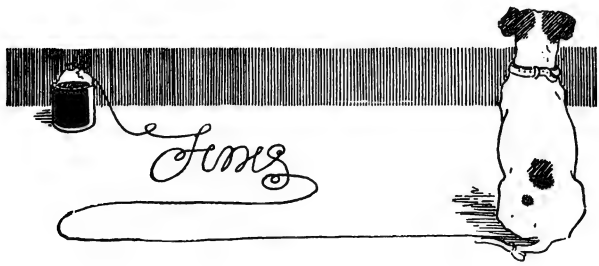
"Would to-morrow be too soon?" said Miss Proctor. "It would suit us as we are so handy."

"Not a bit," said Mr. and Mrs. Noddy in chorus.

In fact, the next day, as soon as they had safely got rid of the incriminating basket-crate, the happy couple and Nipper drove hilariously to the station.

"Well, I enjoyed it," said Mr. Noddy, "while it lasted—and now for the motor-car!" and he slapped his pocket-book.

"I didn't," said Mrs. Noddy. "I had all the drudgery and you had all the fun, but, as you say—now for the motor-car, and a good chance of reversing the position."



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MR. —HIS PAGES.

When September back to duty brings the worker once again,
And his days are regulated by the clock,
When an avalanche of work
Falls upon him with a jerk,
"Mr. X" will help to break the horrid shock.

When the tiresome, tyrant tradesman dips his pen into the ink,
And constructs his huge, unnecessary bill:
When the grasping, heartless dolt
Sheds his paper thunderbolt,
"Mr. X" will make your life worth living still.

Puzzle Penknives or Packs of ROYAL Playing Cards will be given as prizes to readers who forward *new* puzzles, problems, or other tricks which are inserted in this feature. Any readers communicating with "Mr. X" and wishing for a reply, must inclose a stamped, addressed envelope. All letters should be addressed to "Mr. X" (care of THE ROYAL MAGAZINE), 18 Henrietta Street, London, W.C.

WOULD YOU LIKE FIVE SHILLINGS?

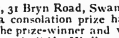
IN the June number of THE ROYAL MAGAZINE "Mr. X" offered five shillings for the best catch, and ten consolation prizes for the ten next best catches, submitted to him.

The number of entries was most satisfactory, but, alas! the catches were in very many cases old and stale even before "Mr. X," that elderly wizard, was born. To such an extent was this the case that "Mr. X" is unable to fulfil his offer of ten consolation prizes, since he can only find five competitors whose catch was worthy of such a reward.

"Mr. X's" congratulations to the following:

Master M. Jaggard, 33 Hill Avenue, Victoria Park Bristol, who wins 5s.
E. P. Mathews, Loretto, Musselburgh, N.B.
Thos. Nicholson, 84 High Street, Hartlepool.
Wm. Rankin, 86 Shakespeare Road, Maryhill.
Miss Gwendoline Powell, The Vicarage, South Shore, Blackpool.
Miss D. Barnet, 31 Bryn Road, Swansea,

to each of whom a consolation prize has been sent. The catches sent in by the prize-winner and winners of consolation prizes will appear in "Mr. X's" pages in due course.



"MR. X" GETS HIS OWN BACK.

It will be remembered that some time ago a certain person calling himself "The Wise Mr. Y," or, to perpetrate once more his own puerile jest, "The Y Y Mr. Y," called on "Mr. X," and sprang an unheard-of riddle on him, thus attempting to wreck his fair reputation; and, in addition, took away his umbrella "by mistake."

Judge of "Mr. X's" astonishment when the faithful office boy a few days ago announced that "that there clever gentleman" had called again.

"Aha!" snorted "Mr. X," sniffing the battle afar, "show him up."

"Mr. Y" entered the room in his supercilious way, and the man had actually the effrontery to be carrying "Mr. X's" umbrella.

"Good morning, sir," said "Mr. X" briskly, determining to get his blow in first; "of course I am delighted to see you, but why do you call on me in a coat full of holes?"

"Coat full of holes!" exclaimed the visitor irritably. "Rubbish, sir, rubbish, sir!"

"Pardon me," put in "Mr. X" in his suave way, "but it *is*."

"Kindly show me where; the coat is a new one," returned "Mr. Y" briefly.

"There are four buttons on your coat,' pursued "Mr. X" with his pleasant smile, "and opposite each button is a buttonhole. Need I go further?"

"Mr. Y" gasped. "Well, I never!" he said at length. "Well, I never did." Then, with deep conviction: "You really *do* take the cake!"

"Ah! excuse me," answered "Mr. X," with a merry laugh, "that is where you err; I take my umbrella!" And, laying a gentle but insistent hand on that implement, "Mr. X" bowed his visitor out.

A TRAGEDY IN TWO ACTS.

The problem of the play:

If Lunn owed Munn money, and went to live in London, what would happen?

THE PLAY. SCENE: London.
ACT I.: Munn dun.
ACT II.: Lun done.

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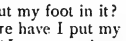
A Great Feat.

George: "Well, James, so you've put your foot in it at last. I always said you would."

James: "Put my foot in it? What do you mean? Where have I put my foot?"

George: "In your boot, of course, Jimmie dear."



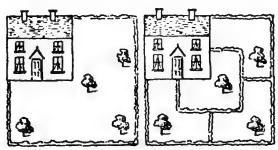
Q. Why is a hen crossing a road like assault and battery?"

A. Because it's a foul (fowl) proceeding.

A Tree Puzzle.

A certain landlord had a square plot of land, in one quarter of which stood a house, let to four tenants. In the balance of the ground the landlord planted four apple trees, placed as shown in the sketch (1).

"Now," said the landlord to the tenants, rubbing his hands, "if you can divide the



(1) (2)

ground around the house into four equal plots, alike in shape, and each containing one of the four apple trees which I have planted, you shall have the land without any increase in your rent."

The tenants worried over the problem for some time, and then solved it as in the second sketch (2).

Cross Purposes.

Williams Tertius: "I say, Secundus, w(h)at was the other name of Tyler?"

Williams Secundus: "Who was he?"

Williams Tertius; "Oh, the chap who revolted in Richard II.'s reign."

Williams Secundus: "Wat."

Williams Tertius: "Can't you hear?" (Shouting.) "The chap who revolted in Richard II.'s reign."

Williams Secundus: "Wat, I tell you!"

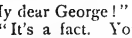
Williams Tertius: "Well, that's what I said, wasn't it?"

A Fact.

George: "I saw a man crossing the street this morning taking twelve steps at a time!"

John: "My dear George!"

George: "It's a fact. You see, he was carrying a small ladder."

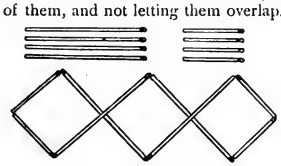


Q. Why is an amateur tenor like a bad sailor?

A. Because he is a bit "wobbly" on the high C's (seas).

Another Match Trick.

This match trick, although simple when you know how to do it, is not as easy as it appears, and is rather ingenious. The problem is to form three squares with four whole matches and four half matches, using all of them, and not letting them overlap.



The result is arrived at by making two X-shaped crosses which touch one another with the whole matches, and completing a square at each end with the halves.

The whole trick sounds simple, but if tried on someone who has never seen it before, it will prove sufficiently difficult to keep them amused for some little time.

A Bargain in Bananas.

"I *do* love bananas," said pretty May to her cousin Robert, "and I got some *so* cheap once.

"I bought a certain bunch at three a penny, and five-sixths of that number at four a penny.

"Then I sold them to Maudie Robinson at sixteen for sixpence, and cleared a profit of threepence-halfpenny.

"Now, *dear* Robert, do tell me how many bananas I bought. I know you are clever."

"Er, well, er——" said Robert.

How many bananas did May buy?

ANSWER.

A Bargain in Bananas: 44.

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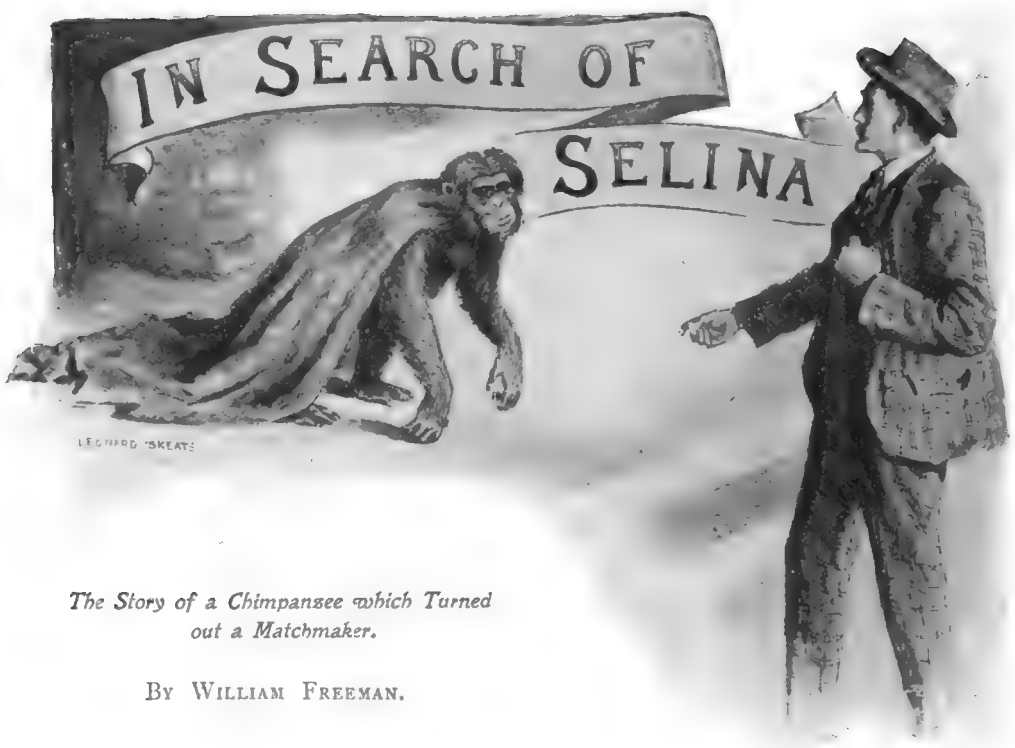

The Story of a Chimpanzee which Turned out a Matchmaker.

By William Freeman.

I.

Frank Blake was on the high road to becoming an artist of some distinction, and his studies of animal life were considered to be very considerably above the average. Commissions were plentiful; the little flat at Chelsea became inadequate, and he ended by buying a house in one of the suburbs and transferring his varied possessions thither. He was not married, for the most fervid arguments on Mr. Blake's part had hitherto failed to convince Miss Gwendolen West of the desirability of linking her lot with his. But there was hope since, as far as he knew, he had no rivals, and she lived at Spenton, the overgrown village in which, by an extraordinary coincidence, the new house was situated.

His departure from Chelsea took place on a particularly vile day in January. Blake's housekeeper, a prejudiced and privileged old lady, superintended the distribution of his effects, with the exception of those destined for the studio. These arrived somewhat later in a covered van, the driver of which announced himself as "Misther Nolan," and was quite obviously drunk. They comprised a well-mannered chimpanzee, several smaller monkeys, a big glass jar containing a couple of lizards, four lop-eared rabbits, a mixed assortment of birds, and Edwardus Rex, the bull-dog.

Blake had got the studio into something like order by the time they arrived. Mrs. Peach had made a final survey and departed, having arranged to spend the night with a friend, and to return in the morning.

He saw the van draw up at the kerb, and under a pile of sacking could distinguish the outlines of the crate in which Selina, the chimpanzee, was travelling. There was a fire in the studio, but the air was still raw, and he paused to take down with him a thick, red-and-yellow Indian curtain.

"I want you to cover up the chimpanzee with this, when you lift off the sacks," he explained to the man.

"Roight y'are, sorr."

"I'll take up the birds first, and then come down and help you," added Blake, and turned back into the house with the cage.

He had scarcely reached the top of the stairs, when there arose from below a wild yell, followed by a series of yelps on the part of Edwardus. Blake finished his journey and ran to the window. What he saw sent him racing down into the street again at express speed.

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"What on earth has happened? And why is Selina's cage open, and where is she?"

"'T'is only your own ordhers Oi'm obeyin', sorr. Oi just opened the dhure av the box, an' fixed the cloth about the baste's body, whin up rushed the dog loike a ragin', tearin' divvle, an' the big monkey gave a growl, an' lep clane out into the road!"

Blake gasped.

"Oh, you everlasting lunatic!" he said. "I only wanted the curtain flung over the crate——"

"'Tis not what ye said, sorr," said Mr. Nolan patiently.

"But — the chimpanzee!"

"The Howly Saints alone know where she's gone, but I saw her scurryin' down the street loike a little ould woman, an——"

"Look here," said Blake, "pass down the other things quickly, and then, if you're not absolutely incapable, we must beg n the search."

"Oi can give ye the boxes," said the culprit cheerfully, "But Oi'm not very stheady on me feet just now."

"Oh, you everlasting lunatic!" he said, "I only wanted the curtain flung over the crate——"

He handed the rabbit-hutch—upside down—to Blake, who hurried with it into the studio.

Two minutes later he returned—to find that Mr. Nolan had made the most of his opportunity. Selina's empty crate blocked the doorway, but horse and van and Irishman were gone—a blurred spectre in the distance that vanished even as he watched!

II.

Blake carried the remainder of his property into the house, and came down into the street again. He was tired and hungry, but the problem of discovering Selina's whereabouts was immediate and pressing.

She was, by nature, an amiable beast, and her usual shuffling walk did not result in very rapid progress. On the other hand, she had twenty minutes' start and a wide choice of routes. Blake had hardly explored more than one or two of the main thoroughfares, but his first duty was, presumably, to call at the police-station, and ten minutes later he was endeavouring to explain the situation to a red-faced sergeant.

"And what is your name?"

Blake gave it, and his address.

"And when did you return to the said unoccupied building?"

"This afternoon. It was when I was doing so that the chimpanzee escaped."

"If you went away leaving a—a reptile like that in a empty 'ouse," said the policeman

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judicially, "no wonder it was wild-like when you came back."

"But I didn't. Oh, great Scott, can't you understand——"

He plunged into fresh explanations, but they broke against the highly-trained, highly-limited intellect of Sergeant Puddock as foam breaks against an iron-bound coast. And Blake, with the knowledge that every wasted moment gave Selina fresh possibilities of mischief, ended by losing his temper, and narrowly escaping detention on his own account. He flung himself out of the station and into the High Street, with the vaguely-formed idea of making inquiries in every shop he passed—a detestable, but apparently inevitable alternative, for Selina loved light and warmth, and the long, brightly-lighted street would be certain to tempt her.

The corner shop was a chemist's. An energetic young assistant was arranging a pyramid of tooth-brushes on the counter when he entered.

Blake hesitated a moment, and then came straight to the point.

"Sorry to trouble you, but have you seen a chimpanzee about here? One bolted from my place in this direction a few minutes ago."

The assistant's expression changed a little. He shook his head.

"It was wearing a red-and-yellow curtain tied round its neck," Blake added; "but, of course, it may have got rid of the thing by now."

"We've seen nothing of the kind about here, sir."

"Thanks. I'll inquire lower down."

He turned to go, but the other leant over the counter, and touched him confidentially on the sleeve.

"Beg pardon, sir, but—I wouldn't, if I were you. I mean—well, it might lead to difficulties. Try a sedative, or a good night's rest, or I'll telephone for——"

"Thanks," said Blake again, and departed, giving him a look that confirmed the friendly young assistant in his diagnosis.

The premises adjoining were let to an ironmonger. A man in a black apron came forward at the sound of Blake's footsteps.

"I have called," began the latter, "about a —er—chimpanzee."

"Sorry," said the man, "but we don't keep it. Patent cement, ain't it?"

"No—you misunderstand me. It's an animal—a big monkey that escaped from a cart outside my house this evening."

The man regarded him fixedly—something as the chemist's assistant had done, but with less compassion.

"What address?"

"'The Larches,' Grosvenor Gardens."

"'Ouse's been empty ever since it's been built. . . . You git out! I ain't seen a monkey, but I've seen a bloomin' loonatic, and that's enough for one night. . . . Git out—quick, 'cause I don't want to make no fuss!"

Blake went. It was the simplest, and, under the circumstances, the wisest course to pursue, but for a moment the primitive man within clamoured to inflict primitive chastisement.

His third interview was briefer. It was with the young lady in the newsagent's adjoining, who had been standing at the door exchanging repartee with a postman. She had seen Blake enter and emerge empty-handed from the two shops, and had come to the conclusion that an elaborate practical joke was in progress.

In consequence, his ingratiating "Good evening" was received with a series of giggles stifled in a highly-scented handkerchief, and an arch "Go *hon!*"

"I have come to inquire," he began, trying to make the words sound convincing, "if you happen to have seen a chimpanzee—a big monkey, you know—either in your shop or in the street."

"Yes," said the girl, with a gasp, "I 'ave. Ugly as Old Nick, and dressed like a toff!"

"Quite right," Blake assented eagerly.

"He—he's a-talking to me—now!" she concluded, and subsided into helpless laughter behind the counter.

III.

Blake did not pause until he was opposite the most imposing business premises in all Spenton—Burdelow's Stores. It was twenty minutes to eight, and on the hour his nightmare progress must end.

He was wondering under what conceivable circumstances he could make his inquiries sound genuine, when there came the Heaven-sent inspiration of making a preliminary purchase and so creating a reputation for complete sanity before asking any questions at all. Blake gazed hopefully into the vast, brightly-lighted windows, and slipped his hand into his pocket. It encountered three coins—a sixpence and two pennies, and he remembered that he had worn a discarded suit while the furniture-moving was in progress.

A moment later he had resolutely pushed open the swing doors and entered the main building.

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A grey-haired and urbane gentleman in a frock-coat approached him.

"I want to buy a towel," Blake said confidently. He had remembered that Mrs. Peach had reported a shortage in house-linen.

"Certainly, sir. This way, please."

Blake found himself piloted the entire length of the department, and became acutely conscious that a good many people were turning to watch his progress. A tired-looking young man with flaxen hair received him.

"What kind of towel?"

"A—er—a roller."

The young man dragged down a heavy roll of material from the shelf behind him.

"This is six-three—our best quality."

Blake shook his head.

"I want a towel—an ordinary roller towel with the two ends fastened together."

The flaxen-haired young man smiled faintly. So also did a group of ladies at the adjoining counter.

"The sewing is generally done afterwards, sir. You will need about three yards."

"He—he's a-talking to me—now!" she concluded and subsided into helpless laughter behind the counter.

Blake was enraged to find himself blushing.

"I see. Then I think a yard will be enough for the present."

He received it, together with a steel button-hook of doubtful quality, and then stood gazing desperately about him.

The shop-walker, who had been lurking unobtrusively in the background, strolled forward again. Blake nerved himself to ask the inevitable question.

"Chimpanzee? I'm afraid not, sir." The shop-walker's tone was still urbane, but he moved encouragingly towards the door.

"The brute was frightened, and sprang out of the cart. She was wrapped in an Indian curtain—bright red and yellow."

"Bright red and yellow. Quite so, quite so." The shop-walker smiled pleasantly. "No, I'm sorry we haven't one in stock—that is to say, we haven't seen anything of the chimpanzee."

He laid his hand in a friendly and soothing manner on Blake's arm, and Blake said something under his breath and turned to go.

He felt that every man, woman, and child in the shop was watching him during that interminable pilgrimage to the door, and a tall mirror over one of the counters suggested the reason.

He had been wearing old clothes, and the dazzling electric light emphasised the fact

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pitilessly. His coat was splashed with paint, and there was a large, triangular tear in one of the sleeves. He had, in the flurry of pursuit, seized the first hat available, which happened to be a dilapidated Trilby, and a pair of blackguardly slippers completed his equipment. The shock of the discovery added a cataleptic quality to his movements which heightened the effect.

There was an opening on his left leading to the bedding department, and Blake paused for an instant as he reached it. Almost simultaneously there was the sound of a terrific crash, and a white-faced customer rushed wildly out, and almost into Blake's arms. She shrank back with a little cry, and Blake himself paled at this last malevolent thrust of Fate. It was Gwendolen West!

For one breathless moment they stared at each other, and then the girl gasped:

"There's a wild beast in there," and collapsed half-fainting into a chair.

Without a word Blake plunged through the opening, no one hindering him. As he approached a pile of quilts, they were suddenly convulsed by a big, heaving body, and a hairy face appeared in the narrow space behind. There was a faint shriek of terror from the watching assistants, but Blake stood his ground.

"Selina," he said sternly, "Selina, you old sinner—come out of it!"

Selina, looking extremely ashamed of herself, blinked in the blinding light, and extended a trembling paw.

"Come out of it!" Blake repeated, and, with a muddied Indian curtain trailing gracefully behind her, Selina came.

IV.

"I think you were enormously brave," said Miss West.

It was a week later, and she and her mother were being shown over the new house. Mrs. West had lingered diplomatically to admire an oak settee in the hall.

"Not a bit of it," said Blake cheerfully. "Selina wouldn't hurt a baby. Scrambling over a dozen roofs, and falling through a skylight had scared her, of course, but——"

"But you didn't *know* it was Selina?"

"I guessed. And—anyway, something had frightened you, and that was enough."

There was an odd little silence. And then, without the smallest excuse, he stooped and kissed her—twice!

"Mr. Blake!"

"I couldn't help it. And you simply *must* marry me now, darling. I daren't show my face in the High Street, and Mrs. Peach is leaving next month. And I don't know what'll happen to Selina and me if you won't come and keep house for us."

Miss West's eyes were raised for a second from the new art-linoleum at her feet.

"Since it's chiefly on Selina's account——"

* * * * *

"Go and tell mother, while I tidy my hair," said Miss West authoritatively, ten minutes later. And Selina's owner went.

Photo H. W. Nicholls.

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Women's Strange Professions

Some Solutions of the Problem: "What to Do With Our Girls."

ALTHOUGH the labour market is said to be hopelessly over-crowded nowadays, and more especially in the case of women, the examples in this article seem to show that, given brains, energy, and originality, a girl can always find some profitable occupation which will enable her to live in comfort, and even lay aside a little store for a possible rainy day.

MISS JANET FREESE.

Hunting Guide.

The only lady in the world who holds a licence as official hunting guide is Miss Janet Freese, of Helena, Montana. She is a capital shot, knows the mountains thoroughly, and can pilot a canoe on lake or river. In private life she is reported to be the belle of Helena.

Naturally, the girl who desires to do more than eke out a bare existence does not adopt embroidery, typewriting, or some other pursuit already well-provided with competent exponents, as a means to her end. She realises that in order to prosper she must, to employ a threadbare expression, "supply a long-felt want," as yet totally unprovided for.

To take as an example the original of the first portrait on this page, Miss Janet Freese was aware before she took up her adventurous calling that there were few, if any, lady hunting guides who would compete with her for the patronage of clients. It is true that not every girl is capable of sustaining such a strenuous *rôle*, but this was all the more to the advantage of Miss Freese. Thoroughly acquainted with mountain and river life, and a dead shot, she saw at once that here was the thing she could do best, and without any hesitation set to work and did it.

MISS DOROTHEA KLUMPKE.

Astronomer.

Miss Dorothea Klumpke, a young Californian lady, commenced her scientific career by gaining the degree of Doctor of Mathematics, being the first woman to do so in France. She has a special building of her own in the great Observatory garden of Paris. For the purposes of star photography, Miss Klumpke makes frequent balloon ascents, and some of her photographs of stars and meteors have been made at an altitude of 6000 feet.

It may well be said that in this country Miss Freese might have starved before she found any scope for her peculiar talents. True. But the pluck and enterprise that brought success in Montana would have won recognition, employed in other directions, in any country or circumstances.

The same originality has brought fame to all the ladies whose portraits appear in the ensuing pages, and will bring it to anyone else fortunate enough to possess it.

MLLE. KOMISSAROCHEVSKA.

Tattooist.

Besides being an actress of ability and renown, Mlle. Komissarochevska is the head of a flourishing tattooing firm in St. Petersburg, the clients of which are, without exception, babies of tender years. To prevent kidnapping Mlle. Komissarochevska hit upon the novel idea of tattooing the babies of wealthy society women with a minute reproduction of their mother's coat of arms to establish identity.

Illustrated with Photos by the Exclusive News Agency.

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SENHORA VOLHART.

Railway Manager.

Senhora Volhart, who was born at Lisbon in 1848, began life as an actress, but she soon threw up the stage for railway work, becoming, in turn, expert telegraphist, train-dispatcher, and general manager of the railway buffets at Carregado, Santarem, and Coimbra. Later, Senhora Volhart was made traffic superintendent of an important section of the line between Coimbra and Leira, and some eighteen months ago filled the position of temporary assistant general manager at the Oporto terminus

MME. SAVIN.

Banker-Actress.

Very great interest has been created in continental theatrical circles by the news that Mme. Savin, the greatest living actress in Russia, has started a savings bank for actresses and all women connected with the theatrical profession. Mme. Savin is probably the wealthiest actress in the world, for, apart from the enormous salary which she has drawn from the Imperial Theatre for the past twenty years, she has received at least half-a-dozen large legacies from enthusiastic admirers.

PRINCESS KOTCHUBEI.

Lady Postman.

During the great Post Office strikes at St. Petersburg about a year ago, Princess Kotchubei, one of the leaders of St. Petersburg society, offered her services to the authorities, who accepted her offer. She delivered letters in her own luxurious motor-car, guarded from possible violence at the hands of the strikers by an escort of armed Cossacks. Evil days, however, have fallen upon the Princess since then, for her husband committed suicide, and she was left very badly off. So the St. Petersburg authorities made her Assistant Director of Posts at a salary of £1000 per annum, and the Princess is now actually at the head of a department in the St. Petersburg Post Office.

MLLE. ARANKA HEGYI.

Purveyor of "Cribs" to Schoolboys.

According to the Hungarian newspaper "Hirlap," Mlle. Aranka Hegyi, the well-known actress, holds many shares in a bureau, which has been established some time at Buda-Pesth, for supplying schoolboys with ready-written essays and prose and verse compositions and translations, in any language, at a uniform rate of 4d. per page. Much amusement has been caused in the Hungarian capital by an unsuccessful attempt on the part of the Buda-Pesth Education Authorities to have the bureau suppressed.

MLLE. VILMA ZILAHINE.

Actress-Magistrate.

A novel *rôle* has fallen to the lot of Mlle. Vilma Zilahiné, a well-known Hungarian actress, who owns a country château near Koerysova, all the male inhabitants of which recently emigrated to America. Mlle. Zilahiné has been elected a magistrate by the women of the place, and her appointment has just been approved by the Hungarian Government.

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FRAU VALENTIN.

Painter of the Arctic.

Frau Valentine, the famous Scandinavian painter of Arctic scenery, has, according to a Stockholm correspondent, returned to her desolate island home off the coast of Norway, upon which is built her studio, the loneliest in the world. Passionately fond of painting the scenery of the Arctic wilds, Frau Valentin is an expert shot, understands the handling of a boat and is thoroughly used to roughing it. She wears the picturesque costume which she is seen wearing in the illustration, and carries her painting materials

MISS PATERSON.

Cow Poster Artist.

One of the most popular of New York's musical comedy actresses, has abandoned the stage to paint startling posters on cows. Miss Paterson, as well as being a good singer and dancer, is a clever scenic artist, and an enterprising firm of advertising agents offered her twice the salary she was receiving on the stage to paint impressionist pictures on the hides of cows grazing in the fields skirting New York's railway lines. Miss Paterson closed with the offer.

MME. MICHAELIS.

Lady Architect.

France possesses a most successful lady architect in Mme. Michaelis, of Marseilles, whose design has just been accepted by the committee for the construction of the new college buildings in that city. Mme. Michaelis' previous successes include the plans and specifications for one of the largest lunatic asylums in France, which was built from her drawings, and under her personal supervision.

MRS. ALLISON.

Vendor of Hotel Labels.

A novel business has been started by Mrs. Allison, a well-known American society lady, who, recognising that many women "globe-trotters" like their travelling trunks to appear well covered, supplies European hotel and railway labels "to choice" at five dollars per dozen. Although Mrs. Allison only commenced business two months ago, she already has the names of no fewer than 4748 "clients" on her books.

LA BELLE FLORIDO.

Founder of a Home for Decayed Aristocrats.

La Belle Florido, the famous Spanish actress, who for the past four or five years has been making a colossal income from her profession, has just startled Madrid, and, at the same time, given herself a magnificent advertisement, by founding a "Home for Decayed Ladies and Gentlemen of Title," who, through no fault of their own, have fallen on evil days. The charming actress's scheme has been taken up by all classes in Madrid, and many amusing comments have appeared in the Spanish socialist newspapers respecting "the uses of adversity."

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SIGNORA BRIGNONE.

Serpent Breeder.

Much interest has been created throughout Italy by a newspaper's discovery that Signora Mercedes Brignone, the talented and popular stage favourite, makes an income of 25,000 lira a year by rearing snakes and selling them to dealers in all parts of the world. Signora Brignone has a farm covering many acres in the neighbourhood of Bovalina, and during an average year she is said to dispose of about 30,000 snakes. The actress inherited this curious but profitable business from a distant relative.

MLLE. TETRATSIN.

Mourners on Hire.

A certain Mlle. Tetratsin, who for many years has held a prominent position on the Russian stage, is also sole proprietor of a large "Mourning Agency" in St. Petersburg. Mlle. Tetratsin's agency, it seems, has an arrangement with many hundreds of St. Petersburg tramps and certain of their number are selected by an employé as "mourners." These vagrants are supplied with everything except boots, which the tramp must show on his feet, or he will not be hired.

MLLE. MARKOVITCH.

"Quick Change" Lecturer.

Mlle. Markovitch, a popular actress, was recently engaged by the Russian Society for the Preservation of National Costume to tour the country districts of remote Russia and Siberia, and deliver lectures to the Moujiks, on preserving the customs and costumes of their ancestors. Mlle. Markovitch, when lecturing, dons the Government dress which should, according to her views, be worn by all the female members of her audience.

MRS. AGGERHOLM.

Trunk Packer.

Such a wonderful reputation as an expert trunk-packer is enjoyed by the celebrated Danish actress, Fru Aggerholm, that a German has approached her with a view to her becoming managing directress of a school for professional trunk-packers which he proposes founding in Berlin during the autumn. Fru Aggerholm was reluctantly compelled to decline the responsibility on the score of professional engagements. Throughout Scandinavia Fru Aggerholm is regarded as the world's champion trunk-packer.

SIGNORA MANDRASSI.

Professional Bridesmaid.

Signora Mandrassi, a young lady of noble family, in the past two years has cleared £1600 by simply attending weddings as a professional bridesmaid. Signora Mandrassi possesses beauty both of face and figure, and her services are eagerly sought. Signora Mandrassi charges no regular fee, but it is the custom for the bridegroom to make her a present of some handsome piece of jewellery.

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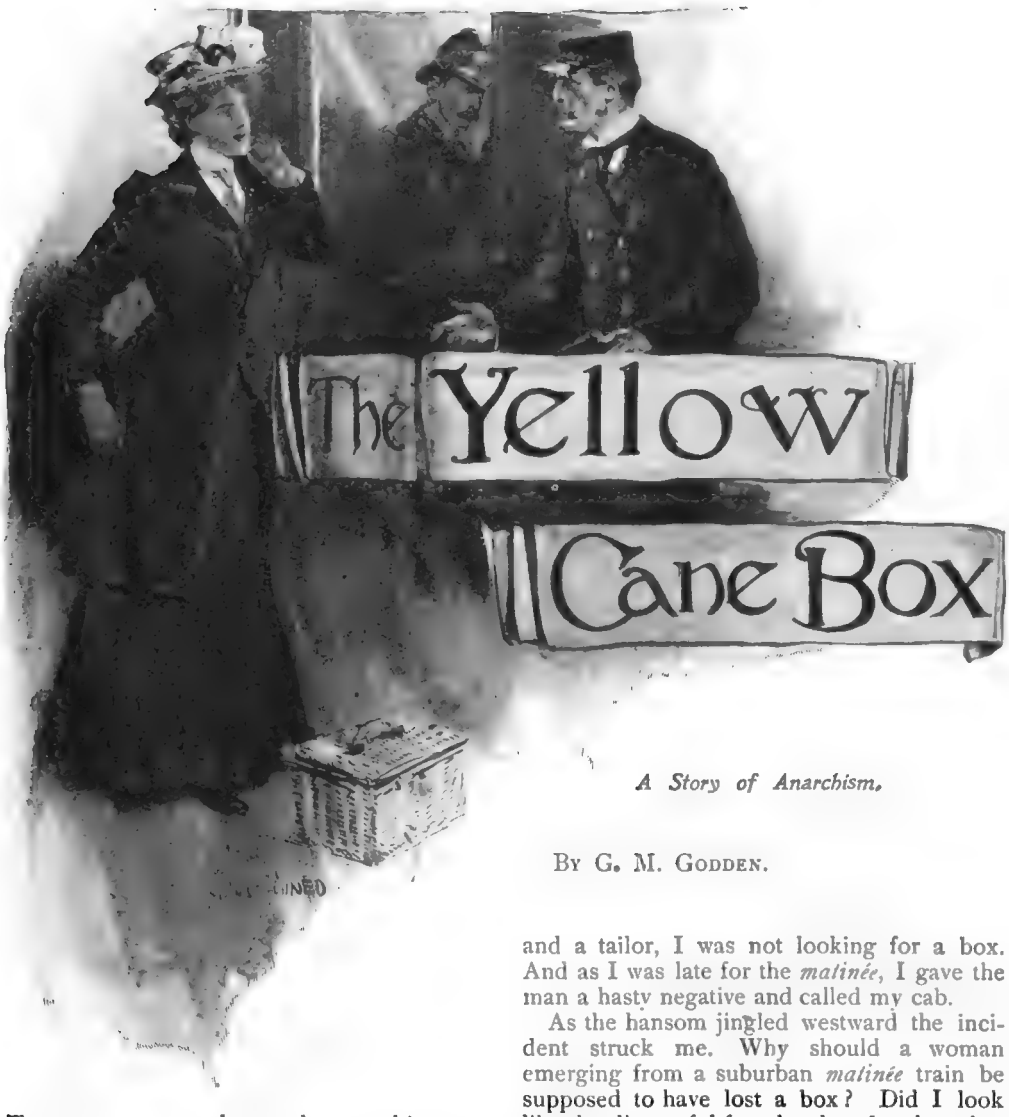

The Yellow Cane Box

A Story of Anarchism.

By G. M. Godden.

There are some places where nothing can possibly happen. The main platform at Waterloo is one of those places; and never was it more steeped in stupidity than on the afternoon of March 31st, the day on which I first came in contact with the yellow cane box.

It was 2.30. A single porter yawned beside a few barrows of neatly-stacked luggage. Three old ladies, a restaurant-car boy in a white apron, and a tall woman with golf clubs, occupied the silent length of the platform. I was about to call a hansom when a porter touched his cap. "Are you looking for your box, miss?" he said. As my business in London that afternoon was a *matinée*, and a tailor, I was not looking for a box. And as I was late for the *matinée*, I gave the man a hasty negative and called my cab.

As the hansom jingled westward the incident struck me. Why should a woman emerging from a suburban *matinée* train be supposed to have lost a box? Did I look like the distressful female who *does* lose her boxes? A glance in the little looking-glass in front reassured me on this point. And why did not the porter wear a scarlet tie? *Was* he a real porter? When I had arrived at that point I took myself in hand, and repeated the aforesaid truism that nothing could ever happen at 2 p.m. on the main platform at Waterloo.

The *matinée* and the tailor occupied me till dinner-time. I dined early and alone, and, as I dined, the box again obtruded itself fantastically on my idle brain. What was Waterloo doing with a lost lady's box? Or was it the box that was lost, and not the lady? By the time that I had paid my restaurant

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bill, and was driving back to the station, I had a dozen boxes and their ladies hovering before my mind's eye. My train left from No. 4, and again the platform was almost empty; a tall woman with golf clubs brushed by me; a couple of porters lounged a few paces away. An inspector stepped up and touched his hat. "Are you looking for a box, madam?" he said.

The words were no sooner out of his mouth than an impulse seized me. I would at any rate see this box that haunted me; the train might go, there would be another in half-an-hour, and see that box I would.

"I am," I replied.

"Then, madam, I think I can restore it to you," said the inspector with a deferential politeness, "if you will come with me." He led the way to a door marked "Private," and not, as I had expected, to the Lost Property Office. This was embarrassing. I could have denied any specimen out of the selection the lost property clerk would casually show me. But here I was being ushered into an empty room, the door of which shut swiftly behind me, and on the floor was a small yellow cane box.

"That is not mine," I said hastily, glancing at the closed door.

The inspector saw the glance and smiled. "I am afraid I shall have to detain you to-night, madam," he said, adding as a policeman appeared at the door: "Call a cab, constable."

My protests were useless. Violence would be worse. Always politely, I was ushered into a cab, the small yellow box was placed on the front seat, the inspector entered, the constable mounted the box, and I realised that I was certainly and swiftly being driven to a police-station. All that I gathered as we left Waterloo was that the case was one of great importance, and that the inspector was not at liberty to speak. Was I already a "case"?

The cab rumbled out of the station, followed by the noise of a motor, and then turned into the dark side-street beneath the loop-line entrance. Suddenly the roar of the motor behind us intensified; an orange-coloured tonneau loomed up; a lamp flashed a blinding glare; and the cab crashed over on to its side. My first conscious feeling was that of being dragged into an orange-lined tonneau, from the shattered fragments of a four-wheeler, an inspector, a constable, and a cabman. Then something was placed softly beside me, and the door was shut. I must have fainted a second time, and when I opened my eyes again it was to a cold stream of night air on my face. The motor was going thirty miles an hour down dark and cobbled streets, as I judged, in Southwark, and I was alone, with the yellow box beside me.

As the stunning effect of the fall wore off, my faculties leapt to alertness. I was undoubtedly in an extremely tight place; and I anathematised alternately and with equal force my own curiosity and the yellow cane box beside me.

The band painted on the yellow cane box matched the motor; both were a peculiar shade of orange which I had seen somewhere before, and a similar shade to which, it suddenly flashed on me, I was at that moment wearing as a necktie. It was a vivid orange yellow. Here was a coincidence so incredible that I leant forward to match the silk of my tie against the band on the box. They were of one shade.

I began furiously to think. In the course of much Continental wandering I had made close acquaintance with Southern Spain. Yes, it was at Barcelona that I had seen that shade of vivid orange on a woman's hat; in a man's tie. I was told that it was the badge of an anarchist group famous even in the city of bombs. The colour had pleased me, and on leaving I had picked up some ties in a shop in the workmen's quarter. *One of those ties I had put on that morning.*

Again I placed the end of my tie against the box; the shade was identical; and then, as I stooped over the box, I heard a sound that set my brain moving at a tenfold rate. It was the ticking of a clock; and it came from the yellow box. Now, to be blown into eternity by a Barcelona bomb in a back street of Southwark was not a prospect that pleased me. I had seen a bomb thrown in a crowded street in Rome, and the memory clung. But the noise of the motor deafened any possible cry for rescue; I could only sit still, watching the dark street of lofty, sleeping warehouses for a clue to my whereabouts, and listening to the ticking in that diabolical box.

As a street lamp showed "George Street" we swerved; a wide gate flew open, we glided into a big courtyard, and the gate closed with a swift bolting of heavy bolts. Above us loomed huge business premises, with the name of a certain firm of photo-engravers.

Then I knew that my only safety was to play the part for which my Barcelona necktie had so ruthlessly cast me; for I was in the central London office of the fighting or

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"Spy," she hissed in Spanish, and her revolver was at my temple.

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I fainted on to the astonished inspector's shoulder as he was carefully dropping the contents of the yellow box into a stable bucket full of water.

Orange wing of the Spanish anarchists, at 9 p.m., alone and unarmed. That Southwark warehouse was as secluded for my hosts' purposes as any cave in their native sierras, and far safer.

The roar of the engine stopped. Then the door of the motor was opened, and I recognised the tall woman with the golf clubs who had brushed by me on the platform; her excellent English was hardly touched by accent.

"It was a near thing, but we are safe now," she observed.

"I am glad of that," thought I, as I stepped out, but waiting a better cue, I stood silent.

"Bring in the 'luggage,' Billy," she called to the man who acted as chauffeur. Then she led the way to the ground floor of the warehouse, locking the door behind her, as Billy and the yellow box came in.

"If you had wired that you were sending the luggage on first, we should have been saved all this worry," she said, turning on me.

She was evidently in a towering passion, and I temporised.

"I was lucky to get through at all," I said.

"Custom house?" queried she.

I nodded. The yellow box, then, was in my charge, and I had shipped it over. That was valuable information. But how to learn more of the part I must play, if I ever hoped to leave this black pile of warehouses alive? "Hadn't you better see if it's all right?" I said.

"Oh, the time is always thirty-six hours," she answered carelessly. "I suppose Emile brought it down for the night boat?"

"Certainly," I answered.

Thirty-six hours, and at the thirty-seventh that yellow box was timed to blow—what? into futurity. Someone in England, undoubtedly, probably in London; and when *was* it started on its thirty-six hours of ticking? For all I knew, exactly thirty-five hours fifty-nine minutes ago. And what was my pre-allotted share in its further proceedings? As I eyed it there, standing in the dark shadows of the huge echoing Southwark warehouse, with the far-off rumble of some all-night traffic in the still air, and a church clock striking ten not many streets away, I longed, as I had never longed before, for the sight of a wholesome British policeman.

The woman was a handsome cosmopolitan type of Southerner; the man she called Billy, and who was stripping off voluminous motor furs, was, I judged, an Anglicised-Spaniard

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from the Basque provinces; both were as hard as nails, and both had the eyes of lynxes. They certainly had revolvers, probably knives also. Quick diplomacy was my only chance. In the corner of the room was a telephone, and several directories.

"I have brought some important messages, can I 'phone?" I said.

"There's the telephone," said the woman with a nod. "Better also ring up your cab, and ask how he is feeling," she added with a sardonic grin that made my blood run colder even than the steady tick, tick, tick in the yellow box. "I'm going to get supper."

This was better than I had dared to hope. But there was Billy.

I moved over to the instrument and looked up the Scotland Yard number. With my finger on the page I turned to Billy.

"I'm afraid I dropped a purse somewhere in the car. Can you find it for me?" I said. And Billy hastened on my errand.

I flew to the receiver. The yellow box in the corner ticked off for me the three minutes before I was put on to Scotland Yard.

"Are you Scotland Yard?"

"Yes," came back an official voice.

"Send at once, Warehouse, George Street, Southwark, to arrest Barcelona anarchists carrying active bombs, timed to explode in thirty-six hours," I hissed in a furious whisper into the receiver.

"Who are you?" cried the official voice.

"A yellow box——" I had just time to begin, as Billy returned from his errand.

"Thanks," I murmured, as I hung up the receiver. Then an idea struck me. "Have we time to go round the place? Will you take me over before supper?" I asked.

"But certainly," said the polite Billy. "It is changed, is it not, madame, from of old?" And he leered at me with an eye full of evil reminiscence. I followed him to the door. At least I should put some space between myself and the ticking of that yellow cane horror in the corner; and it would be odd if an exploration of this echoing, unlighted, eight-storey warehouse afforded no clue to escape.

"One moment," I said. "The custom house was troublesome. I had to chuck my revolver. Can you let me have another?"

"But of course," said Billy, unlocking a safe in the corner of the huge room; "take your choice. It's your job to-night," he added.

The safe held several revolvers, an ample supply of cartridges, and a good deal of delicate clock-work. I picked out a handy size, and saw that the chambers were loaded. Then Billy preceded me, his hand-lamp throwing colossal shadows among the bales and packages of the warehouse. As our steps echoed up a dusty staircase into the blackness aloft, what, I wondered, *was* my "job" to-night?

The Spaniard stopped as we reached the landing, and glanced at his watch.

"It is not yet ten," he said with his soft southern accent. "He will not leave the opera till eleven; you have plentee of time."

Then he turned and took me over the warehouse, fitted up with a skill sufficient to deceive a dozen factory inspectors. Nowhere could I detect a clue to escape. A dash down the staircase would mean half-a-dozen bullets after, if not in, me; and the lady of the golf clubs at the door to finish off anything that was left. The grimy windows looked out innocently on to a similar warehouse across the deserted street.

A solitary policeman stood under a lamp at the corner; but his broad back only made the horror of my own position more actual. No back staircase, no fire-escape even, offered me a possibility of flight. As we came back down the wide dark stairs, the tall golfer was waiting for us. Her scowl now possessed an added flavour of suspicion.

"Supper is ready," she said, adding some rapid Spanish to Billy, of which I caught the words "search" and "countersign." Surely the police might be here by now. In the meantime the impressionable Billy was my hope. As we sat at a rough table not far from where the little yellow box ticked steadily, I exerted every wile in my power on Billy; and I elicited, by means of an assumed nervousness that needed much reassuring, that my "job" was to take the box in the car to a certain number in Park Lane, and hand it to the butler with directions that it was to be placed in his Highness' hands the moment he returned from the Opera.

"Have no fear," said Billy soothingly. "The Chief timed the execution for an Opera night on purpose. The criminal returns always punctually to the moment. You will deliver the box ten minutes before his arrival, and fifteen minutes before—click!" And he smacked his thin lips with a fiendish satisfaction.

Supper over, the longest meal of my life-time, Billy began to put on his driving furs. "Listen!" said the tall woman. There was the very gentle scraping of a key in the big front gates, below a half open window beside us. She leant a little way out of the

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window, and then flung herself on me, with clear murder in her eyes.

"Spy," she hissed in Spanish, and her revolver was at my temple. But Billy, with a spring like a wild cat, tore her off me. My wiles had done their part; this scoundrel believed in me. He stunned the woman with one swift, cunning blow, caught up the yellow box, seized me by the arm, dashed into the courtyard, forced me into the car, started the engine, and was out at the rear entrance to the yard as the big front gate swung slowly back and a police car glided in behind us. The police had come, but precisely ten seconds too late.

Or did they know their business after all? For in a flash their car was on our track, and a race for life began through the dimly-lit echoing cobbled streets of respectable mercantile Southwark. The roar of the engine deafened even thought for a time. I saw that we had torn over Southwark Bridge and were heading eastward. The pursuing car was close at our heels. "Billy" drove superbly, and for the life of me I could not help admiring his performance.

And insistently rang in my ears, as words will in some crisis, two lines, read in a review that very afternoon as I had idly turned the page of a magazine in my *matinée* train:

> If perchance the dawn would hasten,
> If perchance the midnight spare.

To what dawn should I have "hastened" before *this* midnight, speeded thither by the yellow box? Presently I saw a clue to our mad career. Billy, confident in his own superior engine, was trying to exhaust the pursuing car. And gradually the roar behind us slackened. Then, as it seemed, we turned westward, slowly legalising our speed. To my horror I saw street after street flash by in the sure direction of Park Lane. With sheer malignity my "accomplice" drove down Covent Garden, passing the Opera entrance; it was then 10.45.

Ten more minutes and we were in Piccadilly. Yet another five, and the great orange car had drawn up, dust covered, almost consciously panting, at the doomed house. Billy sat back motionless. Then the door of the motor opened suddenly from without. The inspector from Waterloo was on the pavement, his head bandaged, his expression as deferential as ever. Billy, half turning, flung himself on to the starting gear; but the inspector was too quick for him, and two plain clothes men were already on the little Spaniard. He was disarmed in a moment.

"Thank Heaven it's you," said I, and I fainted on to the astonished inspector's shoulder, as he was carefully dropping the contents of the yellow box into a stable bucket full of water.

* * * * *

It took me three weeks to establish my simple suburban identity, and three months to recover from nervous prostration. And during those three months I registered the vow of a lifetime never again to indulge in vain curiosity concerning lost luggage at Waterloo, or to wear Barcelona silk neckties of a peculiar shade of orange yellow.

BACKWARD JAPAN.

Quaintest little couples,
Prithee tell me this—
What is your love-language
If you never kiss?
Formal bows and bendings,
Courteous sayings neat,
Cannot speak so clearly
As the lips that meet.

Love is very bashful,
Love is very shy;
If one asks him questions
Stammers in reply.
Kisses sweet in England
Speak for maid and man—
You should start the custom
Out in far Japan!

C. J. Cole.

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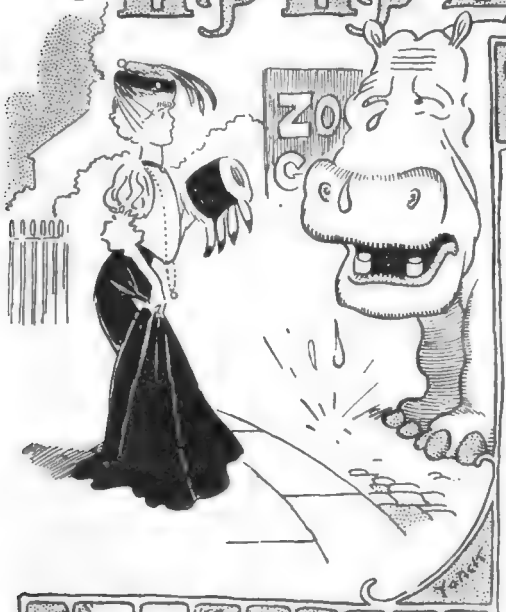
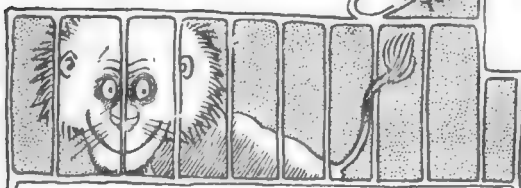
The Hip-Hip-Hip-Hooray!!



"Did you ever," with emotion asked the Hippopotamus
(We'd met in quite a casual sort of way
Outside the Zoo, one afternoon, while waiting for the 'bus),
"Did you ever meet the Hip-hip-hip-hooray?

"I've known," he said, "some most distinguished people in my day
(The Unicorn once lived next door to us),
But I've never, to my knowledge, met the Hip-hip-hip-hooray,"
With tears remarked the Hippopotamus.



"I've heard the name so often—'twas, I think, last Saturday
(I was waiting here to take the omnibus),
That I heard a lot of people shout 'Hip-hip-hip-hip-hooray!'
I wish they'd shout 'Hip-hippopotamus!'

"I'd like to know the reason and the object of this fuss—
When I appear no rapture they display;
But instead of cheering me and shouting 'Hippopotamus!'
They only cry 'Hip-hip-hip-hip-hooray!'"

Before I could explain the point, up came the omnibus
And bore the Hippopotamus away;
But do, if you should meet him, cry "Hip-hippopotamus!'
And not "Hip-hip-hip-hip-hip-hip-hooray!"
Ada Leonora Harris.

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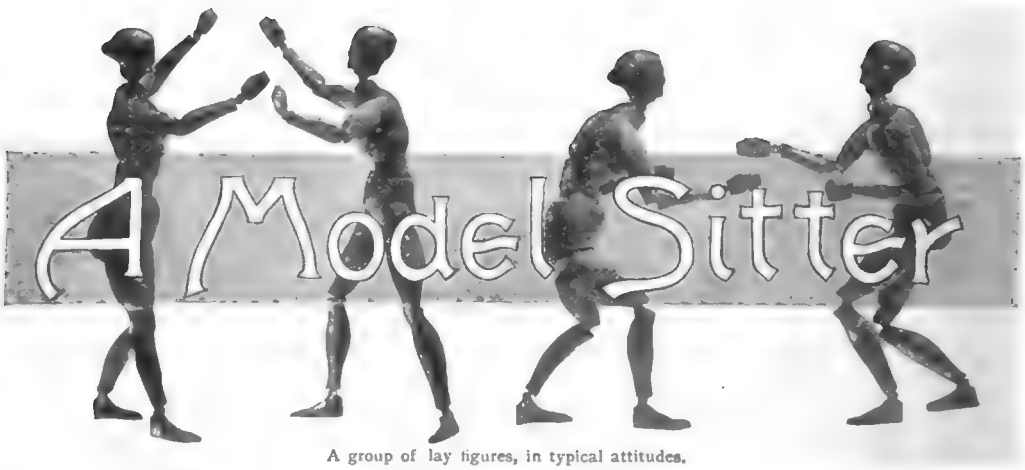

A group of lay figures, in typical attitudes.

(We have to thank Miss Edith Scannell, Messrs. Newman and Mr. G. W. Foy, for permission to reproduce the accompanying illustrations.)

A Short Account of the Artist's Best Friend.

By Lenore van der Veer.

The studio lay figure fills a niche among the immortals. The part played by her in the art of the world harks back to the Stone Age, when blocks of wood were hacked into the crude outline of mankind, and used as models by our prehistoric gentry of the brush.

Since those far-away days she has ever been the prop and stand-by of studio folk the world over.

She will bend and twist her highly-organised body into all sorts and conditions of poses. She will extend her arms in mute appeal towards some imaginary parent, whose unforgiving nature keeps her stationary with outstretched tendons for hours, and days, and weeks, perhaps; yet her devotion to the beloved art of her lord and master never wavers for an instant.

The wear and tear on her sympathies must be prodigious. Within a few short months this faithful creature is often ordained to run the whole gamut of mortal emotions. One day sees her a blithe and thoughtless maiden, wandering across sweet English meadows, hand-in-hand with her handsome lover, and, mayhap, within a week she kneels an aged, broken figure within the portals of an almshouse.

Among my many artist acquaintances I count studio friendships with some dozen or more lay figures, all of whom are pathetic examples of what real heroism sometimes lies in everyday living.

In a studio in St. John's Wood, for instance, I often pass a pleasant half hour or so in the society of a lay figure whose deeds of mercy and kindness to erring humanity are endless and beautiful. She is not young, and her sensitive face and finely-proportioned figure have undergone such tragic wear and tear, that I'm afraid the unsympathetic onlooker might term her appearance a somewhat battered one; but to those who know her history, she is ever fair and beautiful in the light of her good deeds.

How many times on entering the studio have I come upon this tireless creature in the act of soothing care-ridden and helpless brows! For a period of visits I used to see her kneeling by an impromptu bedside, where a pillow, in nightdress and cap, lay patiently breathing its last.

Another time her stiff and apparently rheumatic form was bent lovingly above a tiny cradle, wherein lay nestled, like a soft, fresh rosebud, a property bath towel, stricken down in its innocence to rise no more!

Some few months later I happened to drop in just as this kind lay figure welcomed, with all a mother's devotion and powers of forgiveness, her wayward and heart-broken son who, after years of roaming on land and sea, returned to her in the guise of a carpet-sweeper wearing a hat!

These are but a few of the beautiful womanly deeds that have filled this big-hearted creature's life, and she is still intent upon her works of mercy. The last time I saw her she was standing with the tensest expression of anxiety in her broken old form,

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A touching family gathering of lay figures. Observe the filial attitude of the girl and the boy, and the tender air of the mother.

looking out to sea, where a lifeboat, unseen to all eyes but her own (and the artist's), battled against a roaring tempest.

Another very interesting lay figure, whom I often meet in a South Kensington studio, seems to be the most adored feminine figure in London. She lives in a constant whirlwind of love-making from one day's end to another. I never go into the studio but she is being made the object of some youth's tender devotion and heart yearnings.

Her charm seems perennial, despite time having robbed her of most of the attributes wont to be a syren's stock-in-trade. She is not well off in point of tresses, fingers, or ears. Her head is not always sure of itself, but has sudden moments when it rocks from side to side, and sometimes topples off altogether and rolls at the feet of some impassioned swain.

Then her horsehair contours have long since begun to show the evil effects of frivolous dressing; so, taken altogether, this particular studio belle can hardly be called a beautiful object to the eye, though all the male models who sit to this great painter of sentimental pictures cast languishing glances upon her from nine in the morning till five in the evening.

No artist actually paints his picture direct from a lay figure, as they are too wooden for that, but every painter uses them for substitutes in arranging groups and for painting drapery. They are as essentially studio "property"

A blushing bride in all her wedding glory; this gives an excellent idea of the possibilities of the lay figure.

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A touching scene—a wealthy city gentleman, to judge from his c o'hes, proposing to his adored one.

as the bamboo plants and papier-maché moons are stage properties. The lay figure is always on the scene and grows to assume a real personality to the artist. If she could speak I doubt not but her reminiscences of studio life would prove most entertaining reading. She sees the artist in all his multitude of moods, his moments of triumph, and his hours of dark questionings and desperation.

She has often been the object of his fits of impatience and ill-humour, and has stood any amount of slights and undignified snubbings when fair young models usurped her place in the studio. In truth, the immortal lay-figure might tell the behind-the-scenes story of every great painter who has charmed the world, and what wouldn't we all give to hear it!

They are weird gentry, these lay figures, and often cause no little nervousness among fidgety sitters and superstitious models. The servants in some artists' houses will always hurry past them and look back furtively, as if not sure of their harmlessness.

I confess myself, that to come upon them unexpectedly does give me a bit of a start, particularly when they are tumbled all of a heap on a sofa or behind a screen. They often seem of themselves to fall into most weird and fantastic attitudes, somewhat "creepy" even to the most initiated of us.

Some amusing experiences crop up when the artists move them from one studio across town to another, for they certainly look very suspicious baggage.

A St. John's Wood artist once took a lay figure, wrapped in an old curtain, with him in a cab to a friend's studio some distance away.

The cabman looked frightened out of his wits as this awful "fare" appeared in view in the half light of early evening.

The accepted suitor parting from his *fiancée*.

"Beg pardon, sir," he said hurriedly to the artist, "but what might that be wrapped up like that?"

"It's a woman, my boy," the artist answered cheerily, "but never you mind, it's all right, and you'll get a good fare if you drive quickly."

"Not on your life," the terrified cabby called out, as he lashed his horse into a sudden plunge, and was off down the street

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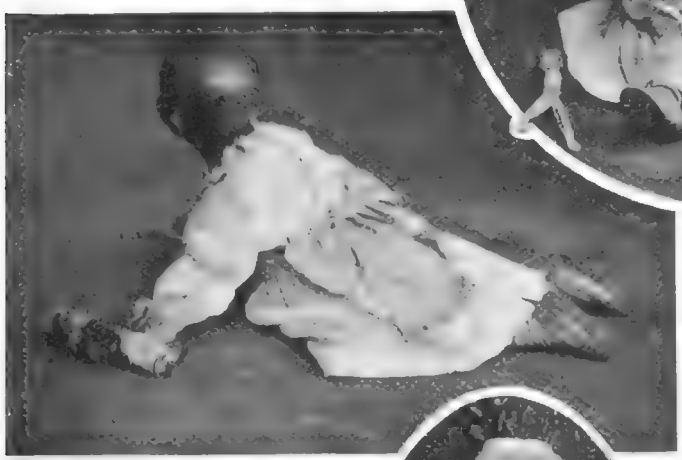
as if he had seen the Prince of Darkness himself.

Another cab was called, and this time the artist was lucky enough to have a real "sporting" driver to deal with.

"Hi," he called out, as the figure was being gingerly placed in the cab beside the artist, "this is a bloomin' fine job, guv'nor—how much am I ter git out of it?"

"The best fare you ever had in your life if you let down the glass and drive quickly," the artist told him nervously.



Baby Jim playing with *his* doll.

Baby Elsie playing with her doll.

"I'm your bloke, guv'nor," the cabby called down through the hole.

On arrival at his friend's house some ten minutes later, the artist played up to the game by parting with several cab fares rolled into one, and mysteriously disappeared amongst the trees and shrubbery of the studio garden. To this day, no doubt, this accommodating cabby believes himself to have locked in his bosom very thrilling facts touching one of London's great mysteries.

A lady artist whom I know had a very amusing experience when moving from one studio to another. The van she employed was a small local one, and driven by a man who had once done odd jobs round a hospital mews, and had evidently heard strange stories of the wards.

Three-year-old Ermyntrude ready for a walk. All depicted by the same lay figure.

When it came to moving the lay figure, she was closely wrapped in brown paper and tied up securely from head to foot. When the man was confronted by this suspicious-looking parcel, he gave a sudden start, and then took it up cautiously, and as suddenly let go of it again.

"I don't like this 'ere job, mum," he exclaimed to the artist.

"But it's only a lay figure," she explained, and it was not until she had made him understand that the contents of the parcel was only a thing stuffed with horse-hair, and used to draw from, that he was persuaded to put it in his cart and drive off.

A policeman once caught sight of an artist carrying a lay figure covered with a sheet from his carriage into the house, and ran up the steps and asked the astonished

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An affecting spectacle—the aged crossing sweeper, bowed by years and suffering, soliciting a trifle.

manservant if that was his master who had just come in.

"I must see him at once," the excited "Bobby" told him.

So the artist, guessing at what was in the wind, had him shown into his studio, where the lay figure, minus her covering, sat, a lovely Venus unadorned, to the blushing discomfiture of the policeman.

The modern lay figure comes as near being flesh and blood in appearance as it is possible for anything short of witchcraft to create her. Newman's, the pioneer artist supply people in London, have gone on experimenting and improving on the old models until there is very little lacking beyond the "divine spark" to make the modern lay figure a veritable Venus to draw from.

An artist once told me of an old woman who used to clean the studio, and who always curtsied when passing in front of the lay figure, evidently taking her to be some sacred effigy of worship.

Another old work-woman used to hurry past the figure nervously, and all the time she was in the studio her eyes would turn anxiously in her direction, as if she was not quite sure of her safety.

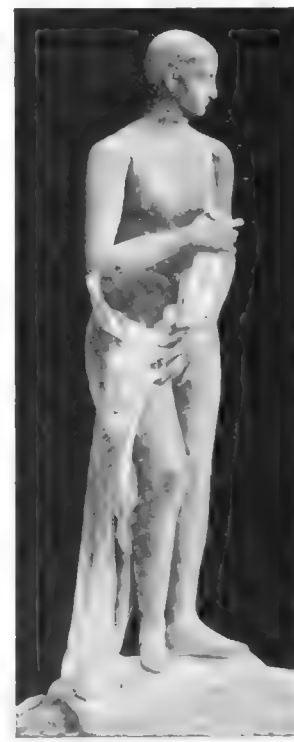
"Is that lady over there your mother?" a little model once asked an artist, after watching closely to see if the lay figure, which was dressed in real grandmamma fashion, was really nodding her head or no as she dozed quietly in a far corner of the studio.

"No," replied the artist laughing; "but what made you think she was my mother?"

"Oh," remarked the small child quite placidly, "I think it was because she has such funny little eyes, like you."

Dogs have great distrust for lay figures as a rule, though a dog I know used to be very devoted to one, and would run up to her and jump about with great delight at seeing her whenever he was let into the studio. He would often hide bones and such treasures under her skirts, a compliment of the highest possible distinction in dogland. A bull terrier belonging to a Chelsea artist has a pronounced dislike for a male lay figure in the studio. One night he got into the studio, and managed to ferret out the offending "gentleman" in an anteroom.

The next morning the artist found the poor lay figure somewhat the worse for the midnight encounter, and, on bringing in the dog, a veritable pitched-battle broke out, for the bull terrier evidently felt aggrieved over the enemy's failure to "fight back" the night before.



The indispensable lay figure in a classic pose.

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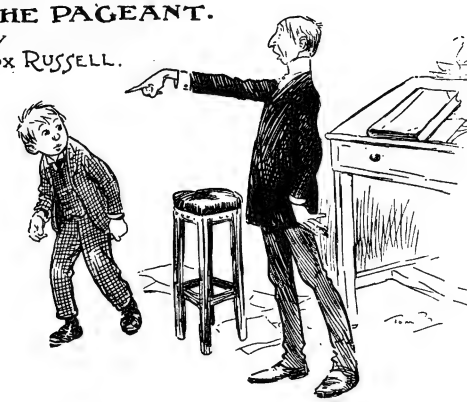
THAT ASS WILSON
AND THE PAGEANT.

By
Fox Russell.

The Story of Exciting . . Adventures . in Fancy . Dress. . .



With all the world going 'a pageanting' in the present year of grace, I thought it would be strange if we (Crogger Prowle's fellows) were left out. We are no "back numbers," I can tell you; Crogger Prowle's can always "do it when they choose," like those people written of by Shakespeare—or was it Thackeray?—or Dickens? I really forget which, now. But, the fact remains, that Crogger Prowle's lot are go-ahead young men, always moving with the times. London was to have its pageant eventually—why not our firm?

Our principal, Mr. Josiah Crogger, had married a blue-blooded lady of high degree, the "daughter of a hundred earls"—at least, she was the niece of a City baronet, and quite a leader of fashion at Tootlebury Common, where they lived in a huge house, standing in its own splendidly-wooded park of one and a half acres. The most had been made of this space, as will be admitted when I say that the grounds contained two gate lodges (east and west), and an extensive—well, fairly extensive—lake; there was room to take four whole strokes with the paddle in the gaily-painted gondola before running up against the opposite side.

Money had been freely lavished on the great shrubberies, the lawns, and the paths, bright red with Dartford gravel; and the whole of the place was most tastefully laid out. I knew, because, on one occasion, Mr. Crogger had forgotten his umbrella upon leaving the office, and I had been sent down with it, late in the afternoon—quite a position of trust.

None of the other fellows had enjoyed my chances of seeing the head of the firm *chez lui*, and I had a really good opportunity of looking about me, for I was privileged to stand on the hall door-mat for nearly a quarter of an hour before receiving a message that nothing was wanted and I could go. You may be sure I made good use of my eyes, and, I must say, Crogger Park is really a magnificent place. But for the fact that the house is only two years old, one would be almost inclined to think it mediæval.

To get on with my story; one morning, it was announced by Sniffins, our chief clerk, that Mrs. Crogger had determined to have a grand historical pageant, and that we fellows in the office would all be pressed into the service. I thought, at once, that I should like to play the part of bluff King Hal. A little padding would be required, of course, as I am rather a spare man. I wonder whether Henry VIII. was taller than I am? I don't suppose so, as I am nearly five feet four in my boots.

But we were not allotted parts for several days after the first announcement, and meanwhile, in order to accustom ourselves to the old-time atmosphere, we agreed to make our conversation as mediæval as possible.

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The fact that we didn't know the exact periods covered was brushed aside as mere detail. It sounded passing well, methought (excuse the lapse), to parley thus:—

"Ho, varlet!" (this to the office boy). "Haste thee to fetch me my favourite goose quill, the blotting sand, and two penny buns from Webber's round the corner."

Whilst Bates would address Simmons in some such words as these:—

"What ho, caitiff! where is that Bill of Lading, with which I lately did intrust thee? An' thou hast it not, thou shalt quickly make acquaintance with the pillory and stocks." To be answered by him:—

"Now, marry come up! I would have thee know, sir knave, that I am no serf of thine thus to be scurvily intreated. Mend thy manners, varlet, or I will teach thee a lesson with my trusty rapier, and that right speedily."

And a rapid pass or two with the office ruler appropriately ended the sentence.

The craze even went so far as to infect our junior partner, Mr. Prowle, who most unexpectedly, one day, addressed old Sniffins, the head clerk, in these very astonishing terms:—

"Odds bodikins, malapert, this is the wrong ledger which thou hast given me!"

Old Sniffins gasped, and went all manner of colours. He evidently thought our principal had gone mad. Meantime, the egregious Wilson kept out of it all. He smiled in what *he* thought was a good-natured manner, and said pageants weren't in his line at all. Just like Wilson, to try to cast a damper on everything, wasn't it?

Then we were all asked down, one Saturday afternoon, to Crogger Park, where Mrs. Crogger (a really magnificent woman and tastefully dressed in blue velvet with diamonds profusely placed all over her) received us, and allotted us our several parts. Mrs. Crogger herself was to be Queen Elizabeth and Boadicea, Joan of Arc, and other notable characters, and that ass Wilson, Raleigh (a part I am just cut out for: Wilson is an agricultural clown, whilst I am quite courtly* mannered. However, I could not dictate to our chief's wife, of course; I doubt if our chief himself would have undertaken that task!). Bates was to be Leicester—fancy Bates as Leicester!—whilst, most ridiculous of all, Simmons was to perpetrate the part of Lord Burleigh. I—*I* was merely to be "a courtier"! "A courtier," indeed. By gad! for two pins I'd have chucked the whole thing and left them all in the lurch. In fact, I did begin to cough, preliminary to protesting, but, just at that moment, Mrs. Crogger happened to fix her steely eye on me and I thought—well, of course, I didn't want to spoil the whole pageant by suddenly throwing up my part, so, with a disgusted expression and an eloquent shrug of the shoulders, I let the matter pass. Perhaps they couldn't have found anyone else to play "a courtier" properly. On reflection, I concluded that it must be a part of importance or surely they wouldn't have wasted *me* on it?

I think Mrs. Crogger must have seen something in my eye, though (I don't mean that I had a piece of grit, or a fly, or anything of that kind actually in my eye; I only allude to the sternness of expression), because she asked me if I didn't feel well, and I hastened to reassure her on this point. Then two footmen solemnly carried a basket of clothes into the room and our costumes were given out for the Elizabethan spectacle. After this we were "cast" for the William I. episode which was to precede it.

"Your hair" (I am a gingerous blonde) "entitles you to the part of Rufus," said Mrs. Crogger, graciously, turning to me, "and, if you are quick at changing, you might double the part with that of Harold," presenting me with what looked like a bathing costume. "And pray don't forget the arrow in your left eye."

Now, how can a fellow wear an arrow in his left eye?

That ass Wilson, of course, got the best part of all, William I. I suppose it's on account of his "manly proportions" as they call it. Simply weight of beef predominating over mind, *I* should say.

As we all had at least three or four characters, of different periods, to play, our work seemed fully cut out for us. Time pressed, so very little in the way of rehearsal was possible. We managed two Saturday afternoons, however, when things went fairly well, with the exception of Bates temporarily forgetting who he was and assuming that Alfred the Great was one of Queen Elizabeth's lovers. Of course that ass Wilson looked quite ridiculous as Sir Walter Raleigh, though Mrs. Crogger chose to consider him a perfect representative of the part. I began to think Mrs. Crogger rather undiscerning in her praise.

That difficulty I previously mentioned about Harold and the arrow in his eye, I got over very effectively: I stuck the arrow behind my left ear, just as I carry a pen at the office.

* County courtly?—ED.

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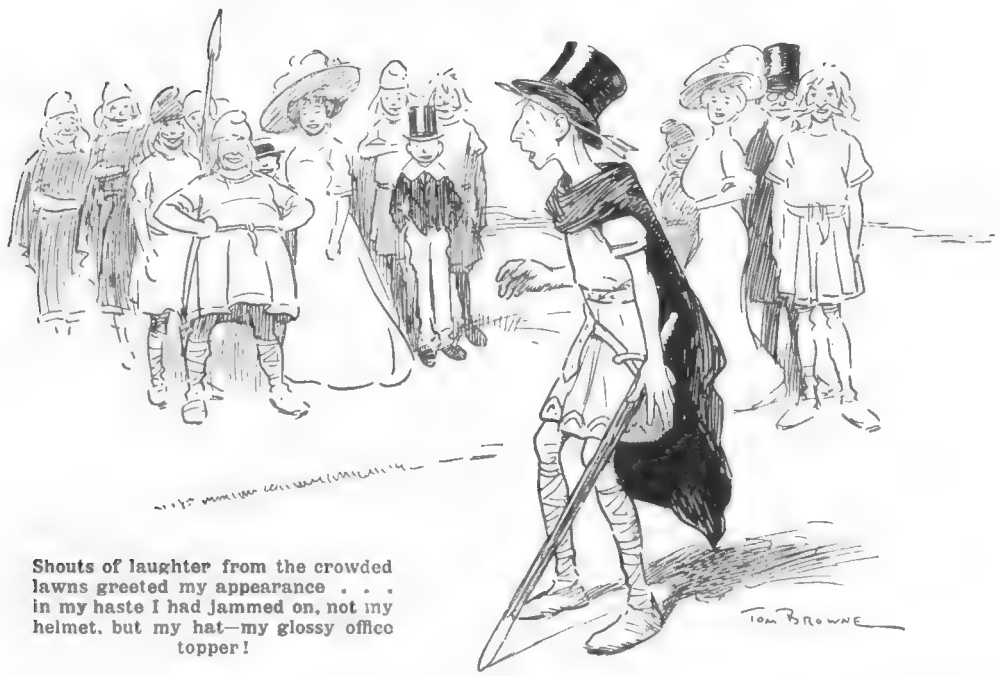

Shouts of laughter from the crowded lawns greeted my appearance . . . in my haste I had jammed on, not my helmet, but my hat—my glossy office topper!

Of course the Firm gave us a whole holiday on the eventful Saturday; and quite early in the morning, we and all the rest of the performers, wended our way through the grounds of Crogger Park like a train of feudal vassals repairing to their over-lord's castle. Wilson, who lives about nine miles off, and had to appear at one period as a mounted knight in armour, rode over on his horse—utter swagger, I call it—but then what can you expect from Wilson?

We were received in a marquee beneath the lordly elms (there are three of them, altogether), and there regaled with sandwiches and bottled beer; then we were shown into the house, where about ten of us were put into each room, in order to dress and "make up."

As I've said before, I don't think it's a fair tax to a fellow's brain to mix him up with so many periods, but, having undertaken six different characters, I naturally intended to go through with them. Up to this point, the day had been perfectly fine and sunny, and I only hoped it would last out over the Elizabethan spectacle where grease paint and ruby velvet were very much in evidence.

"You'll be late, my dear fellow," cried Wilson warningly, putting his helmeted head in at my door as he passed.

"Thanks," I replied coldly, "I think I know what time I'm required."

"But you haven't got on your——"

I simply whistled to show Wilson I didn't need his interference, and, directly he had turned away, the confounded bell rang for "The landing of William the Conqueror at Pevensey."

If it hadn't been for that ass Wilson coming to my room and interrupting me, I shouldn't have been late. I just stuck the small arrow behind my left ear, jammed on my head-piece, and, without even a final look in the glass, rushed downstairs, past the footmen grinning behind their hands, and tore along the garden to the lake.

William the Conqueror had already gone to the far side and was embarking with his followers in the gondola, whilst my Saxons awaited me, their King. Shouts of laughter from the crowded lawns greeted my appearance—I couldn't think why. Imagining that the merriment was caused by the way I carried the arrow, I put my hand up to my ear to remove it. But the substance my fingers encountered caused a cold thrill to run through me; in my haste I had jammed on, not my helmet, but my hat—my glossy office topper!—hence the ribald jeers.

I at once flung it away—and, alas! never saw it again—and with flaming cheeks placed myself at the head of my army of four Saxons and struck an attitude, whilst that ass Wilson was trying to paddle himself across the duck-pond—the lake, I mean. Half way over they

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ran the gondola on to the mud, and were fifteen minutes getting it off again, during all of which time I had to remain posed, which was most exhausting.

When, eventually, William stepped ashore and made his historic stumble, of course he must needs catch hold of me to save himself, and, being much the smaller man, I was sharply brought into a most undignified sitting posture on the ground—and again the people laughed loudly. Why Harold was there at all, I don't know.

According to Mrs. Crogger's idea, the Battle of Hastings was evidently fought on the beach at Pevensey, and Harold was (in the pageant) made politely to help William I. to step ashore. That might have been Mrs. Crogger's view of history, but it certainly was not mine.

Then came a grand march past of Normans in armour and Saxons dressed in a job lot of Roman togas, which old Sniffins had picked up as a bargain; I alone wore a circlet of gold (tinsel) on my brow, and headed the Saxon contingent.

What annoyed me was to see that that ass Wilson was mounted and rode at the head of the procession, and, of course, got the chief share of the applause. Now everyone who knows me knows that I simply couldn't be jealous of a fellow like Wilson, but, really, the idea of Wilson riding a gaily-caparisoned charger, whilst a horseman of my ability trudged along on foot, was too utterly ridiculous for anything.

After the march past, to the strains of a military band stationed behind the rhododendron bushes, Mrs. Crogger came up and congratulated most of the principal performers, but omitted to speak to me. I expect that little incident of the top hat had annoyed her; some people do fuss so over trifles.

But as I said before, Mrs. Crogger is a person of no discernment.

Luncheon followed; and this, I must say, was done splendidly. The supply of champagne was unlimited, and it was not until later on that severe internal sufferings raised doubts as to the quality of the brand.

A scene of the Knights of the Round Table was next on the programme. Wilson was King Arthur, Bates was Sir Bedevere, Simmons Sir Galahad, and I Sir Lancelot; and, by gad! I looked the part, too, until Guinevere — Mrs. Crogger — came on the scene, and then she somehow overshadowed—not to say overpowered—me. I never seemed able to face her eye. Bates said afterwards that every time she glanced at me, I slunk off looking as though I'd stolen the spoons. Of course, Wilson swaggered about and looked quite at home in his suit of mail—all jolly easy, as the mail fitted him. Mine was a size too large, and my helmet came right over my eyes and down the back of my neck. I carried a light Malacca walking stick, and twirled it about with a nonchalant air, but, somehow, it failed to impart a debonair appearance; and, when it came to my declaring, in dumb show, my love for Mrs. Crogger, I as nearly as possible ran away! She is really a terrifying person: even old Crogger is afraid of her, although she has no power to sack *him!*

A grand water piece, on the lake, was to be the finish and climax of the day's entertainment. Mrs. Crogger assumed her Elizabethan costume of ruby velvet, stiff gold brocade, and aggressive ruff, whilst that absurd creature, Wilson, enacted Sir Walter Raleigh, and I was relegated to the part of "a courtier."

Sneaking out of our dressing-rooms behind the house, and through the shrubberies, we embarked—Mrs. Crogger, Bates, Simmons, and myself,—in the gondola, and slowly paddled—I did the paddling—across the water. This was to be the landing of Elizabeth at the stairs of Greenwich Palace and the representation of Sir Walter Raleigh's gallant act in spreading his cloak for her to step upon.

The band played its loudest, trumpets brayed and drums beat, the gondola made its stately progress over the water, the cheers of the people were breaking out all round, when with a soft, oozy sound, we felt our keel ploughing the mud—and we were only half-way across!—the next moment we had stuck hard and fast in the middle of the pond.

I strove manfully with my paddle, but the gondola would not budge an inch. Queen Elizabeth immediately began upbraiding me, *me* with being the cause of the *contretemps*—what was it to do with *me*, I ask? I tried to quiet her by saying that, at the worst, I would take off my shoes and stockings and paddle, like children at the seaside, lugging the boat after me to the shore.

"Don't be ridiculous," she snapped; "there are holes twelve feet deep in the lake!"

All my enthusiasm for paddling immediately died out, as it were, and I made no further suggestion.

The bystanders ran to get ropes, but, of course, none were to be found. To add to

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To my horror the gondola glided silently away from under my feet.

our woes, it began to rain, and one of the footmen rushed into the house and returned with an umbrella for Queen Elizabeth, which he dexterously threw into the boat, hitting Bates somewhat severely on the nose in the process.

But we couldn't make the gondola move with our solitary paddle, and I began to feel almost panic-stricken. Then, in desperation, I seized the paddle again, and, turning its handle downwards, began to use it as a punt pole. This promised better. I rammed the handle into the ground and then shoved vigorously, stepping along the whole length of the vessel's side until reaching the stern, where, in the act of giving a last shove off, I hung on to the pole just a moment too long. To my horror, the gondola glided silently away from under my feet, and, whilst releasing the boat from its mud-bed, I found myself perched, like a monkey on a stick, depending for dear life on the stability of the paddle!

And then this slowly began to subside. I yelled persistently for help, and that ass Wilson, from the far side of the pond, immediately ran to the water's edge and launched a ladder in my direction—fancy such a wet thing as a ladder, all holes, more holes than solid when you come to think of it.

However, I suppose it was all one could expect from Wilson. Now, if it had been *I*, I should have chosen a hen-coop or a raft—of course, they might not have been there, but, after all, that is a mere detail.

I scrambled on to the ladder and it almost sank with my weight; however, I was comforted with the reflection that, at least, it would save me from going into any of the twelve-foot holes which Mrs. Crogger had mentioned. As soon as I had reached the muddy, slippery bank, Wilson grabbed me by the back of the neck and the waistband of my purple velvet inexpressibles and unceremoniously hauled me out.

Then we hurried and scurried round to the far side of the pond, and Wilson, with a great air of what he thought gracefulness, knelt and spread his cloak for Queen Elizabeth to tread upon as she alighted from the gondola, now temporarily dubbed the State Barge.

The laugh which had been excited by my *contretemps* (funny how the unthinking world is always ready to jeer at undeserved misfortune) quickly gave place to an outburst of cheering when this pretty historical tableau was thus presented so vividly, and I fancy that I as "a courtier" certainly contributed my full share to the picturesqueness of the situation.

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Then came the *pièce de résistance* of the whole pageant. Queen Elizabeth was to mount her white palfrey and rally her faithful followers at Tilbury. After walking in stately procession from the pond side through the shrubberies and round the garden path in full view of the spectators—now all hoisting umbrellas—a groom, attired in correct Elizabethan costume, appeared at the top of the lawn, leading a gaily-caparisoned grey charger (one of the carriage horses, as I afterwards heard).

As soon as he came up, Mrs. Crogger prepared to mount, and, not to be behind-hand, I shoved past Wilson, and offered to put her up. Mrs. Crogger grasped the horse's mane and then she put a fairly large foot (Mrs. Crogger is a woman of fine proportions) into my clasped hands and sprang upwards. I, unfortunately, went downwards with the overwhelming weight at the same moment, and sprawled on my back.

Fresh shouts of ill-natured hilarity rent the air, and immediately that ass Wilson rushed forward to, what *he* called, "save the situation" —mere officiousness, of course. Mrs. Crogger was hoisted into the saddle, and then, as I struggled to my feet, a brilliant idea came to me. I would not be outdone by Wilson; I would "out-Herod Herod"—outdo Sir Walter Raleigh in gallantry. So I quickly untied my velvet cloak, flung it off, and, with a grand air (they say I have the most regal air of all the fellows at Crogger, Prowle's), spread the gorgeous garment for the horse to walk upon, and looked up into the steely eyes for my rewarding smile.

I didn't get it. For, alarmed by the cloak, the idiotic horse took fright, and bolted off through the gooseberry bushes and thence into the cabbage-patch. I, the groom, Wilson, Bates and Simmons all made after it, but, giving a hoist of its heels, which sent Mrs. Crogger well up its neck, and shunted her crown over her left eye, the perverse brute at a high stepping trot, started away, tail in the air. Snorting loudly in his excitement, he blundered on across the asparagus until reaching the marrow beds, where, his feet sinking deep in the soft earth, he came to such a sudden stop that Queen Elizabeth slid clean over his head, and sat down in the adjacent cucumber-frame with the most alarming crash.

This incident practically ended the pageant. We assisted Mrs. Crogger into the house, and, whilst smiling on Wilson, she only favoured me, who had done so much for the entertainment, with a haughty stare. Through this woman's baleful influence I should have been compelled ignominiously to resign my position at Crogger, Prowle's but for the fact that Wilson, the egregious Wilson, interfered yet again, and, after enlisting the sympathies of Sniffins on my side, actually called on Mrs. Crogger to intercede—intercede indeed! —on my behalf.

So once more I owe my retention in my present slavery, as all my other humiliations, to that ass Wilson.

Alarmed by the cloak the idiotic horse took fright and bolted off.

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Real Life Romances.

The Editor is Pleased to Buy True Real Life Romances Five Hundred Words Long.

For Posterity.

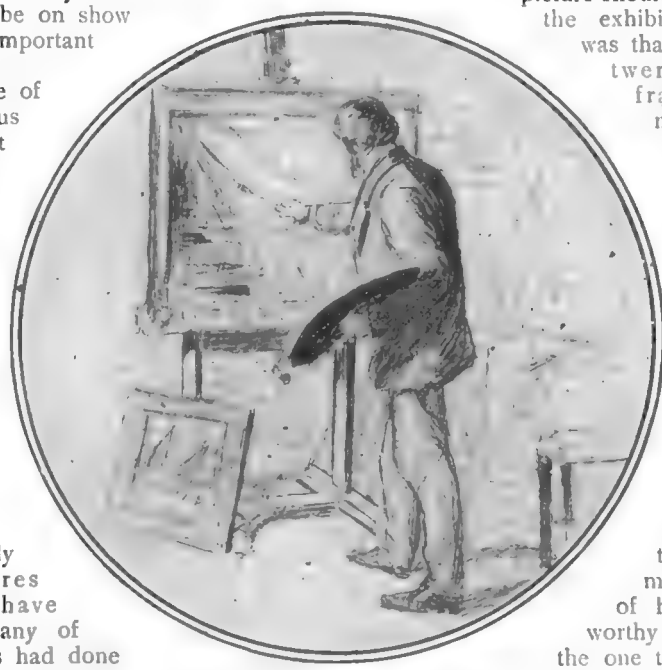
AN ARTIST'S ROMANCE.

ONE day not many months ago a buzz of excitement was evident in French art circles. An extraordinary tale was on everyone's lips. It seemed incredible that a man could have rendered valueless the fruit of three years' labour. But such was the rumour, and it was confirmed on every side. Not a picture by Claude Monet would be on show at the coming important exhibition.

The absence of the marvellous impressionist scenes that had made the name of Claude Monet famous in every salon would leave a want in the exhibition impossible to fill.

Three years' work absolutely ruined; pictures that might have fetched, as many of Monet's works had done before, fifty thousand francs apiece! Such was the problem that baffled French art circles, for as yet the reason had not leaked out.

Only Claude Monet knew, and he himself had not known twenty-four hours before. Then it was that a flash of inspiration had come. It had happened thus: Claude Monet was at work in his studio. Around him were a score of paintings which he was preparing for the great exhibition. It was a moment when any artist might feel justly proud. But at this moment as he stood before one of his canvases and viewed the myriad reflections in the bit of lake scenery, a doubt shot through the artist's mind.



With one swift stroke of his palette brush, Claude Monet destroyed the scene.

Was this the best that Claude Monet could produce? Was this the ideal of the impressionists that he was striving to attain? Was this to represent to future generations—to posterity itself—a masterpiece of Monet? To each question a voice within him answered "No." Then the decision followed. That picture should not be hung in the exhibition. True it was that it might fetch twenty thousand francs, or even more. But what was that? Art—art must not be the slave of money! With one swift stroke of his palette-brush, Claude Monet destroyed the scene.

Now more disconcerting thoughts came to the artist's mind. Were others of his pictures unworthy of his art, like the one that he had destroyed had been? He eyed critically the second. One glance sufficed to satisfy him that this, too, could never go down to posterity as a sample of his work. And it followed the fate of the first.

Then, one by one, Claude Monet examined the rest of the canvases.

Not a qualm of regret passed through his mind as the same sentence and execution was passed and carried out on each until scattered around him, worthless, cut, and besmeared with paint beyond recognition, lay his labours for three years. Posterity must have his best, and for that the exhibition must wait another year.

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Executed!

A RUSSIAN ROMANCE.

ALTHOUGH the story about to be told justifies its inclusion under the heading of a Real Life Romance, it is a story that deals more with death than with life, and of an experience of which not one man in a million survives to tell the tale.

The first act of the tragedy began in 1905. The Baltic Provinces lay seething in revolt, and the stern arm of the Russian Government was repressing the rebels ruthlessly.

Amongst these rebels was an Esthonian named Lust. Only too well he knew the fate that awaited him if, perchance, he fell into the hands of the Imperial troops. With them was no quarter, only a brief trial, and—a tree!

But one day, despite all efforts to escape, Lust found himself a prisoner. Justice was summary in Russia in those troubled days. He had scarcely been a captive an hour before he was tried by court-martial, and condemned to immediate execution. Half-dazed, the doomed man followed an escort of twelve soldiers out of the camp. For a mile he tramped beside the soldiers, until suddenly he realised that they had halted. His brain cleared, and he realised that he had reached the last stage of his journey.

A word of command dropped from the sergeant's lips, and the peasant saw the soldiers form up in a double line before him. He offered up a prayer that he might die as bravely as many a one of his comrades had died, and leant his back against the tree. The sergeant bound a handkerchief over his eyes, while the front rank of the soldiers knelt upon one knee, with rifles ready.

A quick word of command, and the peasant knew that every rifle was trained on him. A second command followed, a deafening report, and the peasant fell.

* * * * *

Night had fallen over the scene of the execution. Dark shadows hid the motionless form as it lay where it had fallen beneath the tree. Then the moon rose, and cast her steely blue light on his face. The man stirred slightly. Presently he opened his eyes. Was this death? For a while he wondered thus vaguely within himself. Then he raised his hand to his face and feebly pulled the handkerchief from his eyes. The moon shone through the trees above his head. The peasant shuddered as the sight brought back the terrible ordeal of the evening. Yet he was alive! His body ached and felt as if half cut asunder. But he lived! Raising himself painfully, the peasant looked around him. Not a hundred yards away he could see the outlines of a small hut. Now on all fours he crawled until at last he knocked feebly at the door. An old woman answered the call, listening with horrified face as the peasant slowly told his story. When he had finished she helped him into the hut, bathing and dressing his terrible wounds as best she could.

An old woman answered the call.

It was two years before Lust was able to move outside the hut, and in that time not a soul knew that anyone occupied the little hut beside the aged dame. But he was recognised in one of his walks by the local police, arrested, tried, and sentenced to two years' penal servitude.

Still even though the final punishment seems severe, in a few months the peasant will be free.

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Lost on a Mountain.

A WELSH ADVENTURE.

ONE Sunday afternoon, Dr. Hahn, a young Berlin physician, who was staying at the Pengwryd Hotel, Llanberis, set out to climb one of the highest peaks in the Snowdon range. Night fell, and the doctor had not returned. When the morning of the next day had passed by without the doctor's appearing, inquiries were made. No one knew which peak the missing man had intended to ascend, but it was soon discovered that he had set out unaccompanied by a guide. The news that a visitor was lost in the mountains quickly spread, and the same evening a search party set out.

Meanwhile, let us turn to the object of their quest. Leaving the hotel, the doctor had made straight for Glyder Bach, a spear-like peak rising up near Snowdon. The afternoon was bright enough at the beginning, and, braced by the exhilarating air, the doctor ascended the peak for a considerable distance. No thought of danger was in his mind, for he was an experienced mountaineer.

Never through all the . . . three miles torturing descent . . . did he lose his courage.

Half-an-hour later, a change had come upon the scene. Surrounded by a dense fog, the doctor groped his way step by step down the mountain. As long as he could keep to the rugged, winding path, he felt that the danger was not great. But an unexpected peril lay in wait for him. He stumbled and fell. As he tried to rise, an acute pain in his leg caused him to fall again. The agony was intense, and he became unconscious.

How long he lay thus the doctor has no recollection. When consciousness returned, he realised that day was dawning. His body was numb with cold, and his clothes drenched by the heavy mist that still enveloped the mountain. A bar of chocolate, from a small stock that he had fortunately brought with him, staved off his hunger, and he began to review the position.

All through the day the doctor lay buoyed up by the company of a few mountain sheep. Then another night fell, which the injured man passed in fitful doses. At last day broke, revealing the mountain free from mist. With the warm sun beating down on his half-frozen body the doctor felt his courage return. At all hazards he must make an effort to move, even though he knew that his leg was fractured.

With difficulty he broke the heavy stick that he had brought with him into three pieces. A period of untold agony followed whilst with two of the pieces he bound his injured limb in splints. But never through all the pain that he suffered, and the three miles torturing descent, when every movement was fraught with pain as cruel as any Inquisition rack, did he lose his courage. It was death to have remained on the mountain, and agony to move, but life was worth all the suffering. At mid-day the doctor, overcome by his exertions, sank down at the brink of a deep cavern.

Away in the distance a man climbing the mountain saw a figure waving a handkerchief frantically. Stretchers were brought, and the doctor learnt that he must have traversed three miles on the winding mountain-path with one of his legs broken.

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Photo W. Witham.
Mr. James Forge.

SURVIVORS' TALES OF GREAT EVENTS

No. XLIV.—WITH GARIBALDI'S ENGLISH LEGION.

From the Narrative of Mr. JAMES FORGE.

As told to WALTER WOOD.

In 1860 Garibaldi, who was fighting for Italian unity and freedom, passionately appealed to Englishmen for help. Strange advertisements appeared in several newspapers, stating that a party of Englishmen were about to visit Italy, and that it was desirable, as the country was infested with brigands, that the members should carry firearms. The "party" developed into a fighting force of nearly a thousand men, and became known as Garibaldi's Legion of Englishmen. This remarkable band existed for only a few months; then it was scattered, and now only a few of the original members survive. Amongst these is Mr. James Forge, whose romantic story is retold, and who is almost in his seventieth year.

A SPARK of fire to young hot blood turned me into a soldier of the Legion of Englishmen who fought with one of the noblest patriots and haters of oppression that ever lived—Guiseppe Garibaldi. I was in my twenty-first year at the time, and greedily read everything I came across concerning the wrongs of the poor of Italy. Such tales were told as roused me and thousands of liberty-loving Englishmen like me to frenzy. At last I heard that the King of Naples had honoured a barber for inventing a new instrument of torture—a crude device of a rope with an eyelet at the end. Through this ring the other end of the rope could be put, then the head was incircled, and by means of twisting with a piece of wood or metal terrible torture was inflicted. Such was the sort of cruelty which was practised on the peasantry, and incited them to fierce rebellion against their oppressors.

That was the actual cause of my joining the band of English volunteers who were being raised to go out to Italy and cast in their lot with Garibaldi. I presented myself at an office in the Strand, and was accepted. I know that another young man, burning with a wish to help the down-trodden, also wished to enlist. He was rebuffed by some jack-in-office, and went away. Afterwards he became Lord Mayor of London—the Right Honourable Sir William Treloar. In spite of his great successes in life, I still believe that nothing would give Sir William greater pride in these days than to be able to say he was one of Garibaldi's veterans.

There was in this volunteering that element of mystery and danger and romance which irresistibly attracted men from every grade of society. A duke's son was amongst the legionaries; men of distinguished family and position risked all to take a share in the thrilling task of helping to secure a people's freedom. Besides, there was the spirit of adventure in it all, from start to finish, and much talk of trouble with brigands in the hills. We were promised, and expected, plenty of excitement; and I think that men never crowded more into a few months than we of the English Legion did.

There was mystery and secrecy at the very outset. The volunteers had been enrolled. The rich men amongst us had provided their own outfit and fighting gear; the humbler soldiers were fitted out from mysterious sources. We were told that we should never be allowed to leave the country, and that even if we got away we should be intercepted, and sent to the bottom of the sea. What cared we for that? We were young, and we were dare-devils; and the greater the danger the more thrilling the work. That was what I

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thought then. I look with different eyes on things in these days; but, you see, I am talking now of nearly fifty years ago.

We assembled almost secretly at the old Shoreditch Railway Station—the principal station then of the Eastern Counties Railway Company, now the Great Eastern. They used to say that Shoreditch Station was run by two porters and a boy; and it seemed as if that might have been true when we soldiers of the Legion turned up there, knowing nothing except that we were going to Harwich.

I did not even know where we should embark—and I prided myself on understanding a bit about the shores of England, for I had done two years in coasters, running mostly from the Victualling Yard at Deptford. We got on board a wonderful paddle-boat called the *Emperor*, of Hull, which had been employed in conveying troops to the Crimea, and we stealthily made our way as far as Southend. Another steamer, the *Malazzo*, was also employed.

Then the real excitement overcame us. All sorts of pains and penalties were threatened against us, and the terrors of punishment vividly pictured. I cared nothing for all that—and I even forgot the threats in watching the smuggling on board of arms and ammunition and such other things as war makes needful. If the authorities really knew what we were doing in the peaceful Thames, they showed no sign of interference; and I understood this later, when the bias of the Premier, Lord Palmerston, in Garibaldi's favour became known.

The *Malazzo* carried about 300 men, and the *Emperor* about 500. The volunteers were of all nationalities, but mostly British. We were called excursionists, tourists, adventurers—all sorts of pleasant gibes were hurled at us—but mostly by people who themselves preferred to stay at home.

We steamed down as far as Gibraltar, and anchored. A strange man-o'-war came in, and vanished in the night. Many a good volunteer quaked after that, for she was reported to be a French ship, whose purpose was to take or sink us; but we never saw anything more of her. I, for one, was thankful, because I had enlisted for guerilla warfare and not to be lost at sea.

At the end of September, 1860, I landed at Naples, and the Legion got a glorious reception. I was with a contingent of Birmingham men, about twenty-five splendid fellows, who were all good bruisers, such wonderful fighters with their fists as well as their rifles and bayonets that they became known as the Fighting Fourth, after the number of their company. And they were humorous comrades, too, as ready to laugh and jest as they were to storm an intrenched position. The Neapolitans threw confetti at us—not the harmless sort of thing which does duty nowadays at carnivals, but little egg-shaped sweets, which could give one a really hard knock.

One of my Brummagem comrades was smartly hit. "Hey!" he shouted in his genial, homely way. "What's this they're thrawin' at us, lads? Why, bless my soul—it's sugar plums!"

In that region of marvellous scenery—the glorious Bay of Naples and the smouldering majestic Vesuvius, symbolic of the slumbering passions of the people we had come to succour—we were straightway confronted with the pitiful evidence of wrong and suffering. There had been desperate conflicts between the royal forces and the insurgents, to whom no mercy had been shown, and the roads were littered with broken waggons and useless war material; the houses and the churches were filled with the wounded, and almost everywhere were little mounds of earth, which showed that some hard fighter was in peace at last. It was not exhilarating, now that I was face to face with it. The charm of some things wears away so quickly when you get into actual touch with them; but I had enlisted, and I meant to see the business through.

The Legion was commanded by a splendid Cornishman named Peard—a born patriot, though not a trained soldier, in spite of his title of colonel. He was a dead shot and a fearless fighter, a cheerful comrade, too, and he inspired the youngsters among us with many a laugh and pleasant word.

"You want fighting, eh, my sons?" he said, as we were marching from Naples to Caserta, something like a score of miles away. "Very well, you shall soon have it. Take my word for that. You will listen to music that will make you dance a bit, in spite of yourselves."

Even as he spoke, there was a strange hissing in the air, an involuntary ducking of heads, a paling of many a bronzed face—then an appalling crash, and almost a united sigh of thankfulness.

A shell from the enemy had been fired at us; it had almost exploded in our midst; but not a man was hurt by it, except in his feelings, and I can assure you that in that direction some of us were badly damaged. You see, it was the very first shell that I and many others had ever heard—and that is the kind of

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music which is an acquired taste. Yet I soon got used to it, and to like it, just as I became accustomed to the sound of bullets. Experience teaches you so many things—and I swiftly learnt that the bullet which you could hear was the harmless bullet. That was the fatal shot which made no sound, except the dull and awful thud of impact.

"Show us where they are!" shouted one of the Birmingham men. "We want to get at 'em!"

And that was the constant cry—to get into actual touch with the enemy. But an extraordinary thing about the fighting was that we never got to close quarters with the enemy. As swiftly as we advanced they retired, luring us into every sort of death-trap, inducing us to show ourselves in the open, and present our bodies as targets. Every farmhouse was a little fort, every church seemed to be a fortress, every lane an intrenched position. A harmless hedge would suddenly burst out into tongues of rifle fire; the peaceful windows of a church would also spit red tongues.

One day, desperately goaded, we rushed a church, believing that we should take or kill the defenders. We stormed it, and battered our way in. I expected to find the floor swarming with men, soldiers standing their ground; but to my amazement I discovered that the interior was filled up with scaffolding, just as a building is scaffolded for repairs, and that from these lofty places the enemy had fired upon us through the windows and the loopholes, shooting us down as we advanced, and scurrying off before we broke into the church. It was exciting, but unsatisfactory. As an Englishman I liked to get at my opponent; but the foe had little wish to make our bayonets' acquaintance.

The enemy cunningly drew Garibaldi's force of twenty thousand men or so to within a quarter of a mile of Capua, where they numbered something like twenty-five thousand. The forces were unequal, but everything was in favour of the enemy. They were strongly fortified; they had cut down every tree and made the country open, so that we should not have a vestige of shelter. It was a hard task for us, and I think that even the most greedy fighters on our side considered that here at last was enough to satisfy the keenest battle-craving.

Garibaldi was perfectly cool and confident, and he entered upon the fight for Capua in a spirit that made his victory certain. He seemed to have a charmed life. You never knew where he was, for no sooner had you discovered him at one spot than his presence was reported at another.

"Lie low!"

The order was given to all of us, but personally I did not need it. I had managed to find a solitary tree—and I sheltered behind it with a wonderful affection for the protecting trunk. A cross-fire was blazing upon me, and it seemed as if every bullet would have me for its own. There was an incessant whizzing and thudding in the earth and on the trunk. These were honest, harmless sounds—they did not count. Such missiles, at any rate, could not hurt me, for had not they spent their venom on other targets?

I was listening hard and crouching lovingly against the tree. I was troubled too, because I had just been out into the open, at my colonel's command, to help a newspaper correspondent named Mr. Tucker. I had found him lying on his face, shot through the temple, and all we had been able to do was to get his body into the shelter of a barn.

Crouching at my feet was a brave and cheerful soul from Birmingham, a young fellow named George Prosser.

Time after time Prosser called out to me: "Are you hit? Are you hit?" and I answered repeatedly: "No—not yet, at any rate.".

I was intensely absorbed in watching the action of a daring rider who came out deliberately from the enemy, to draw our fire, I think. He was a solitary horseman, and his coolness was wonderful and splendid. I believe he was hit by one of our own people, but I could not say, nor could I take further notice, for just then I heard the voice of Prosser again.

I turned and looked at my comrade. He was lying down, stretching himself back, so that he could put his hand in his pocket. He stuffed it deeply in and withdrew it.

"What's the matter?" I inquired anxiously.

"Oh!" he answered, cheerfully and calmly, "I've just felt a sort of prick; but it's nothing."

He withdrew his hand and held it up so that I could see. "Bother it!" he exclaimed, "I wouldn't care if they hadn't broken this!"

Prosser held up a shattered meerschaum pipe, a beautiful present of which he was very proud; but I did not pay any heed to the gift, I did not trouble about his loss—I centred all my attention on a reddening of one of the fingers that had been dipped into the pocket, evidence, as it seemed, of some slight wound.

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I had managed to find a solitary tree—and I sheltered behind it with a wonderful affection for the protecting trunk.

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"Hallo!" I exclaimed, "you're hurt!"

"Not I—or not much, anyhow," he assured me; but the courageous look died almost as he spoke. And how could it be otherwise, for he had a gaping wound in the groin, and some days later I met a sad-faced Sister of Mercy who told me that my brave and cheerful friend had passed away.

That was the work of one of the silent missiles, one of the bullets which I had not heard.

I was soon afterwards helping to carry away a dead man, and felt a curious pricking at my calf. I finished my task, then bent down and examined myself, and discovered that the sensation was due to the contact of my leg with the point of my bayonet which I had put into the half scabbard. The lower part of the scabbard had been shot away, and the torn edge was lacerating my limb as I helped to bear the fallen soldier from the battlefield.

I wondered then if the bullet which had mortally wounded Prosser had been more merciful to me, and I now believe that it first struck my scabbard and then entered his groin.

Those are two of the incidents which stand out most clearly in my memory concerning that fight with the royal forces in Capua. Another picture comes back into my mind—that of the burial of Mr. Tucker, or Captain, as we called him. At night we dug his grave, and by torchlight we laid him to rest—a valiant Englishman who had given his life to that cause which to every Englishman is sacred—the cause of liberty.

Garibaldi had driven his opponent out of Naples and forced him to take refuge at Capua; then he triumphed again and compelled the King with his army to surrender, and I marvelled that trained troops should so easily collapse before our own leader. They had everything in their favour except numbers; but their smaller force was more than compensated for by the strength of their position and defences. They came out of their fastness, and it was a long and tedious business to take their rifles and other arms and ammunition. They could have done so much, and it seemed to me that they had accomplished so little.

Vesuvius frowned and smoked in the distance; hills surrounded us, and on their crests I saw the vultures hovering—the carrion birds which had kept us such close company now for many days. I had sailed from England for change and excitement, and I had plenty of both. I had made the acquaintance of actual red war; now I was to learn something of brigandage, for I was ordered with my comrades to seek and capture or destroy the poor wretches who in that oppressed and unhappy country had taken to the last refuge of the destitute and desperate.

The hills swarmed with brigands and marauders, and nothing that I had gone through so far gave me quite the same sort of thrill as I experienced when in the dead of night I was hiding in the hills behind a boulder, listening with fast-beating heart for the sound of footsteps.

There was no time to challenge—that would have been foolish. The only way was to capture first and try afterwards; so I was one of those who used to wait in hiding till some stealthy footstep was heard in the blackness—then it was a case of pounce out, of a desperate struggle, of a sudden overwhelming of the brigand—or a swift shot or stab by some lithe creature who was mercilessly hunted and knew that the hand of every man was against him.

One morning, I remember, I helped to bring in half-a-dozen brigands. They were handed over to the civil authorities, and disappeared from life. I cannot tell you what their fate was, but I daresay the gaolers could. Little mercy was extended to the wretched wrongdoers in those days.

Many a thrilling hour I spent in those brigand-infested mountains. I was posted one dark night in a dangerous spot where the outlaws were in force.

I was under an Italian sergeant and an English officer—a subaltern of a Line regiment at home, I think, who was on leave, and employed his holiday in learning the war game. There were many such adventurous souls who went out to Italy mysteriously, and at the end of their leave rejoined their regiments in England. I do not think they were asked any questions as to where they had been or what they had been doing.

"Now, Forge," said the subaltern, "your post is here"—he indicated a fearsome and lonely place on a mountain pathway—"and your duty is to hide behind this boulder. Keep your eyes open and your ears on the alert, and if you hear anybody come by, spring out, muzzle him, and then challenge him. But, for the sake of your own skin, muzzle him first."

I promised obedience, and in that forlorn and dangerous spot, isolated for the time, I set to work to carry out my orders. There was no need to warn me—the instinct of

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self-protection kept me alert enough, I can tell you.

I saw many brigands who did not exist; I heard disturbing and stealthy noises; I jumped away from many assailants—at any rate, from what I supposed to be seekers after my life; but as a matter of fact, I suffered only from my own overwrought nerves, and shrank from the creatures of my heated imagination. There was no one near me; no sound to break the appalling silence of the hills.

But suddenly I heard a faint commotion in the distance—two or three miles away, doubtless, because in the mountains at night sounds carry so far. Every nerve was on the rack, every muscle hardened, my grasp strengthened on my loaded rifle. I was ready to obey my officer—to be the first to strike. It is the instinct of self-preservation.

The sounds became clearer. There was the rumbling of wheels, I could hear a man's angry voice, I detected noises which I could not understand—strange thuddings, and after them fiercer exclamations.

What was the meaning of it all? If these were brigands, why did they come along in such open fashion into the very clutches of an enemy whom they knew to be lying in wait to take or destroy them?

A voice was at my elbow—and I could have accomplished the remarkable feat of jumping out of my uniform. I turned to obey my orders—only to find that it was the lieutenant.

"This is queer," he whispered, "but I think I understand what it means. Be ready!"

The noises grew in strength; the cause of them was in the road in front of me.

"Now!" exclaimed the officer.

I sprang out and made a wild grab. My hand caught the bridle of a horse, and there was a sudden stoppage of a cart and the terrified shouts of a man—not a brigand, but a cruel peasant, who was beating his animal unmercifully, after the custom of the people.

Half-a-dozen of us had sprung into the roadway, as it seemed, from nowhere, and above the turmoil rose the wails of the peasant and the angry voice of the lieutenant.

"If you were in England," said the officer sternly, "you would be severely punished for cruelty like this. Here you do not know any better—and you shall go if you give me your promise never to beat the horse again."

"Surely I may do what I like with my own!" cried the man. "I bought him!"

"You may not ill-treat your horse," replied the lieutenant—"not, at least, while Englishmen are about. Now you may go—and remember your promise."

The peasant and his horse and cart vanished, and I am afraid that the poor animal soon had to pay for the scare which his owner had got. This was the sort of man that we were fighting to save; yet what better proof could you have of their hopeless degradation, and the need of some such liberator as Garibaldi?

The brigands kept us on the rack without cessation. They were so artful, so desperate—and so ignorant. The hand of every man was against them, and they retaliated on humanity at large, some of them not troubling to distinguish friend from foe. One thing is essential to successful brigandage, and that is a rifle. My own was a very fine weapon for those days—a long Enfield—and as several of my comrades' had been looted, I kept a very sharp eye on it. Cunning robbers failed to take the Enfield from me, and the brigands resorted to trickery.

One night a mysterious man came up to me. I demanded to know his business.

"I will tell you," he answered. "I want your rifle."

"Then," I assured him, "you want something you won't get." And I kept a closer eye than ever on my Enfield.

"Ah, but," he explained, "I want to *buy* it!"

"So," I replied, "that puts a very different aspect on the matter. And how much will you give for it, my friend?"

"Two dollars!" he told me promptly, and I took it that he was astonished at his own magnanimity. Certainly he was generous, for why should he give even a few shillings for my firearm when so many of his brother marauders got them for nothing?

Now there were three good men and true—again from Birmingham—to whom I spoke before I came to a decision, and the four of us invented a glorious plan for keeping the rifle and getting the brigand's two dollars. Not very high-principled, it is true, but still, war-time is war-time, and brigands are brigands.

"Wait till I come back," I said to the brigand at last, and when I had seen the three good Brums I gave him his instructions, and we separated to clinch the bargain.

I got my rifle, I fastened a length of string to it, I lowered it through an opening of the building in which I was quartered, and in the stillness of the dark night I and my brother conspirators exulted because of our coming victory over the brigand.

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The Enfield disappeared into the gloomy depths where the marauder was in waiting. He was to take the rifle, and in return was to send up his two dollars.

He was an honest and confiding brigand, for as soon as the rifle reached him he got his money ready. By that time we were all assembled at the foot of the building. We had his dollars; his hands were already clasping the Enfield lovingly; the three Brums and I were prepared to crown our victory, when——

Suddenly, in the darkness near us, there was a swift swoop, a wild little *mêlée*, a furious confusion of tongues, mostly with a ring of Birmingham in them; a general seeing of stars which had no place in the firmament, and a wail of grief from the brigand.

He had lost all; so had we, for a pair of brother brigands had been hiding in the darkness, they had sprung upon and out amongst us, and almost before we could gasp they had snatched the rifle and vanished in the hills.

The military police pounced promptly on the wretched brigand, and he was punished for stealing a rifle which he never got! Poor chap!

There were in the ranks of the motley crowd who fought under Garibaldi many strange and romantic creatures. Not all, I know, were inspired by patriotism, but one at least burnt with the zeal that possessed Joan of Arc and Charlotte Corday, and had that spirit of daring which enabled Grace Darling to immortalise herself. This was the Countess della Torre, a valiant soul, who was considered one of the most beautiful women in Europe, and who, I verily believe, won as many hearts as the General himself, though in a different way. She wore the famous red shirt, which was the recognised fighting uniform of Garibaldi's troops, but which I myself did not don.

The Countess was remarkable for her cool courage and her activity. She scoffed at danger, and had a wonderful effect on the spirits of those who at times might have been disposed to take a gloomy view of the result of the struggle for emancipation.

There was another brave lady, too—Signorina Mario they called her out there—who was in charge of the ambulance; but in reality she was an English girl, named Jessie White—a daring soul, just out of her teens, who had given up everything so that she might devote herself to the cause of the suffering and the oppressed. I heard very little of the histories of these two remarkable volunteers, and I have often wondered what became of them.

I as corporal was out one day with a few men, detached from our main body. In the distance I saw a little band of mounted men.

"Now, my boys," I said, "we're in for something. Let us hide behind this point till we make certain who these fellows are."

We sheltered and we looked, craning our necks, and I was thankful and relieved to be able to shout: "Why, it isn't an enemy at all—it's Garibaldi and his staff!"

At that moment, when the General was almost upon us, a man came out of a gate with a basket of figs.

Garibaldi pulled up and took a fig. Then he looked at me and held out his hand—with the basket in it.

"*Inglese*, take," he said, and with a kindly smile he rode away with his staff, leaving the freshly-pulled figs in my hand.

Can you wonder that so many volunteers were ready to fight for such a leader?

Another incident will show the largeness of his heart. One day a distracted woman came to Garibaldi and implored him to find and care for a pet lamb belonging to her little girl. She prayed him to protect the animal and restore it.

That night the liberator was observed wandering about the camp. In the early morning he was seen asleep—and the lamb was snuggled at his side, under his cloak, waiting till he could restore it to its broken-hearted little mistress!

Many a soldier of the English Legion was left at rest in Italy. Those of us who survived gave our arms into the Arsenal at Naples, and were packed into one small ship to sail for England. We ran into dangerous weather, and the ship was saved only by the desperate device of crowding her stern with human beings, so that her propeller should be kept as much submerged as possible. If that had not been done, and her head kept to the seas, she would have foundered, and the world would have wondered what had happened to the survivors of Garibaldi's English Legion. As it was, the captain put some of us ashore at Gibraltar and ran away, leaving us at the Rock for a month. Then he put into Falmouth, instead of going to London, disembarked his troops, and scuttled off to Havre, where, I fancy, he hid till the clouds had rolled away.

Lively experiences, it is true; but, you see, we ran big risks in serving in such a campaign, and we had no redress. Nor, beyond our medals, did we get any reward.

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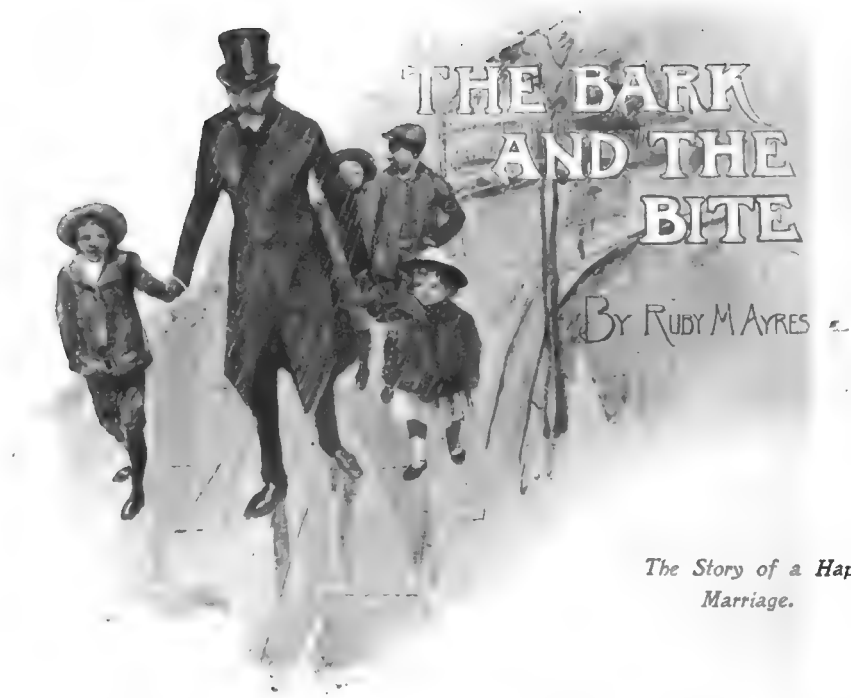

The Story of a Happy Marriage.

"I HEAR that the unfortunate man is a widower," said Miss Edwardes.

Her voice and eyes were contemptuous, as she looked out of the window on to the pouring rain and dreary street, down which a man, tall and round-shouldered, with his coat collar turned up and his boots down at heel, was plodding, surrounded by four boys of various sizes and shapes, whose laggard steps he was doing his best to encourage.

From time to time he coughed, and the cough seemed in keeping with the stooping shoulders and general air of depression that hung about him.

Miss Edwardes turned her eyes from the window to the silent figure of her companion, to whom she had addressed her remark, and repeated it with a touch of impatience.

Miss Edwardes' companion looked up from a copy of "Pilgrim's Progress," from which she had been reading aloud.

"Yes," she said, "I know."

Miss Edwardes sniffed—a ladylike sniff, but indicative of profound contempt.

"And before he was a widower," she said, "he was a hen-pecked husband. The fact is apparent by the cut of his coat and the droop of his shoulders. One, two, three, *four* boys! Heavens! the house must be a pandemonium."

The companion said nothing. She was watching the little disconsolate string of pedestrians turn in at the gate of a small, ugly house a little way down the road on the other side.

Miss Edwardes uttered a sudden ejaculation.

"I *knew* he would do it," she said triumphantly.

"I wonder who'll brush his clothes," said Miss Edwardes' companion.

The two women watched while the man with the cough hauled his youngest offspring from a puddle at the gate into which he had fallen for no apparent reason, and amid the screams of this unfortunate the party vanished into the house. The younger woman brought her eyes back to the book on her knee with reluctance.

She loved children, though it was a fact of which nobody was aware, and she was thinking how she would have liked to gather the poor little muddy, motherless screamer into her arms, and wipe the tears from his eyes, and the mud from his shabby clothes.

But she only turned another page of the book she so cordially detested, and asked if she should continue to read.

But Miss Edwardes had lost interest in the progress of Pilgrim.

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Her eyes were still looking towards the ugly house.

"Thank Heaven *I* never married and had a family," she said fervently.

Her companion made no answer. Silence, more often than not, seemed the only possible way in which to meet Miss Edwardes' remarks.

"It was absurd to drag them all out in the rain," pursued Miss Edwardes. "I wonder where they have been?"

"Church," said Miss Edwardes' companion. She did not think it necessary to add that she had seen the little procession start out an hour earlier, armed with prayer-books.

Miss Edwardes sniffed again.

"I suppose," she submitted with sarcasm, "that he is keeping some absurd promise made to the Dear Departed, to bring them all up in the way they should go, in spite of rain and hail, and other items of no importance. Well"—with great wisdom—"it's a 'way' from which they will all depart as soon as they are old enough to please themselves." She rose from her chair in the window, and crossed to the fire. "Jane," she informed her companion, "that man's wife was a Tartar. I am convinced she had a Roman nose and large feet."

She put out one daintily-shod foot, and looked at it admiringly.

"Women with large feet are strong-minded and loud-voiced," she asserted. "It takes three generations to produce a slender foot."

No answer seeming necessary, Miss Edwardes' companion gave none.

She was a small, slender woman, with wistful eyes.

It was generally understood that she was a poor relation of Miss Edwardes, but nobody knew for certain, and she was simply known as "Miss Edwardes' companion," though Miss Edwardes herself addressed her as "Jane."

If she had a personality of her own, she hid the fact admirably, and she kept house for and waited on Miss Edwardes; but as to her own feelings or wishes—whether she possessed any, or whether she did not, nobody knew, or troubled to find out.

The two women were a great contrast this wet Sunday afternoon, sitting together as they had done every Sunday afternoon for, perhaps, more years than either would care to remember—the one seeing the world through her wistful eyes as a drab, unlovely place, where one must do one's duty and not complain, and the other—well, who shall say *how* she saw it, as she stood looking down into the heart of the fire.

Miss Edwardes was tall and stately and grey-haired.

She wore dresses that rustled when she moved, and exuded a faint scent of lavender.

She was a wealthy woman, but—unless one counted the slender person of Jane—she had not a friend in the world.

Her tongue was too sharp, her manner too downright for her to be lovable, and nobody knew it better than she herself, though she excused her loneliness with the logic that it was better to be without friends than to know that they came for what they could get.

So, with the exception of an occasional visit from the doctor, and her lawyer, and the vicar, who called four times a year for five guineas, which he considered hardly earned after as many minutes of Miss Edwardes' sharp tongue, nobody ever entered her house.

As she stood by the fire now, she was wondering to what sort of a home the widower and the four small boys, who had for the moment excited her interest, had gone.

She watched the firelight sparkling on the rings she wore.

"A man should not be allowed to parade his misfortunes to the world," she said suddenly. "It is full enough of misery without a man adding to it by dragging past one's windows in the rain. Look at that droop of his shoulders!"

Miss Edwardes' companion *had* looked at it—a great many times, and a vague familiarity in it had stirred a tender, sleeping memory in her heart.

She moved restlessly, put down Pilgrim, and joined Miss Edwardes by the fire.

"He needs some cough medicine," she said abruptly.

Miss Edwardes stared. "Why doesn't he get some, then?" she retorted.

"Possibly for the same reason that a starving man doesn't go and order an expensive dinner," said Jane with mild sarcasm. "I suppose he neglects himself to provide for the boys."

"It would be interesting," said Miss Edwardes, "to know how he manages it."

"He is a City clerk," said Miss Edwardes' companion. "And he sits in a poky office from nine to six, and coughs."

Miss Edwardes stared again.

"The little servant girl told me," the other explained, flushing. "She came to ask if I could let her have some milk one night after

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the shops were shut. She paid me with a penny, a halfpenny, and two farthings, probably the contents of one of the boys' money boxes."

Miss Edwardes moved her hand suddenly, so that the folds of her dress hid the diamonds—she felt somehow ashamed of their glitter.

"The world is a miserable place without money," she said.

"And not always Heaven with it," said Jane.

"I did not know that you were a philosopher," said Miss Edwardes. "And it all depends what you mean by 'Heaven.'"

"Love," said Jane suddenly. "Love, and friends, and a home, and—and perhaps a husband, and dear, tiresome, noisy children—" she broke off as if ashamed, and drew back into the shadow.

Sheer amazement kept Miss Edwardes silent.

"It's fortunate we haven't all the same tastes," she said at length. "'Dear, tiresome, noisy children,' as you call them, are all very well once a week for five minutes, but when it means all day, and every day, and nursing them through measles and whooping-cough, and having to darn their socks and patch their clothes, and taking them to church in the rain—ugh!" with a delicate shudder.

"Anyway," she resumed after a moment, "we've got quite enough to think of, without concerning ourselves with the affairs of this man Lawless, or Lawfull, or whatever his name is, and I think— Good Heavens, Jane, what is the matter?"

For Miss Edwardes' companion had left her chair and come forward into the firelight, which, with all its warmth and glow, could not disguise the sudden pallor of her face.

"What—what did you say his name was?" she asked.

Miss Edwardes raised her brows.

"What name—what are you talking about, Jane?—oh, the creature across the road! I believe his name is Laws, Alfred Laws—in fact, I'm sure it is—a letter came here by mistake, and—Good Heavens, Jane!"

For Jane had suddenly burst into tears, and run from the room in a way very unlike the staid, emotionless woman whom Miss Edwardes had never suspected of possessing feelings beneath the placid exterior she invariably showed to the world.

* * * * *

Two days later the doctor's carriage stopped at the ugly house across the road.

Upstairs Jane watched the doctor alight with a strange sinking at her heart. The man with the drooping shoulders and the cough had not been to the City office for two mornings, and Jane waited tremblingly, all unconscious of the fact that downstairs Miss Edwardes was doing precisely the same thing—not tremblingly, it is true, but with a certain eagerness that was not all idle curiosity.

Both women were rather preoccupied when they met at lunch.

"I suppose the boys are down with measles," said Miss Edwardes irrelevantly, when the servant left the room.

There was no answer from the end of the table, where Jane was pretending to eat.

Miss Edwardes frowned; she had not forgotten that burst of tears on Sunday afternoon.

"I shall send one of the maids over after lunch," she said. "Not that *I* want to know the man's business, but if it's anything infectious I shall go away."

Still no answer.

"Jane," said Miss Edwardes. "Do you know that at times you are a distinctly unpleasant person to live with?"

* * * * *

Later, from different windows, Miss Edwardes and her companion watched the departure and return of the smart maid who carried polite inquiries to the ugly house.

"Measles," Miss Edwardes decided, and would have been prepared to stake her entire fortune on it, had it been required of her.

But it was *not* measles. The man with the cough had coughed harder than usual and broken a blood-vessel, and it would be some time before the stuffy London office saw him again—if ever.

"Exactly what I expected to hear," said Miss Edwardes, and was firmly convinced that it was.

Miss Edwardes' companion said nothing, but that night, when she knelt down to say the prayers that long use had turned into almost a mere habit, she prayed for the man with the drooping shoulders, who lay in the unlovely bedroom across the road, and his name did not come to her lips as that of a stranger.

* * * * *

The smart maid crossed the mud again next day, and returned with disquieting news.

"If he dies," said Miss Edwardes, "those children will be thrown on the parish. Well, the vicar need not come to *me* for a further subscription. I give five guineas every

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quarter to the Poor Relief Fund, and not another penny will they get out of me."

She turned a page of the book she was reading with a determined hand. "Jane," she began. But Jane had left the room.

Half-an-hour passed. Miss Edwardes rang the bell.

The smart maid answered the summons with tip-tilted nose.

Yes, she knew where Miss Jane was—gone across the road to the ugly house.

Miss Edwardes gasped—she gasped twice—then she recovered her dignity and dismissed the maid.

It was getting dusk when Jane returned.

She came into the room where Miss Edwardes sat. Her face was flushed and her eyes swollen with crying, but there was a look of youth and happiness about her, before which Miss Edwardes sat silent.

Jane stood by the fire. When she spoke, her voice shook a little, but not with nervousness.

"I am going to marry the man with the drooping shoulders," she said, and while Miss Edwardes sat, wondering dazedly if the end of the world had come, she told her, very simply and straightforwardly, that the man with the cough, and the four little shabby boys, was the man she had loved when a girl—oh, many years ago—how they had been parted by a misunderstanding, and he had gone away and married; how something in the droop of his shoulders had recalled him to her; how she had recognised his name when Miss Edwardes spoke it; how that now he was ill she had been unable to stay away, and that all was forgotten and forgiven, and that she was going to marry him and take him away with the money she had managed to save, till he quite lost the cough; and that she was, to cut it short, going to spend the remainder of her days darning socks for him and the four shabby boys.

Then she paused, and Miss Edwardes found her breath.

"I am going to marry the man with the drooping shoulders," she said.

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The other was to Jane, and was presently taken to her as she was packing her one box.

"You're mad," she said—"mad! and the man's a widower!"

"He loved me first," said Jane, and her voice also said: "He loved me best, and still does."

"You'll starve," said Miss Edwardes, but Jane only smiled.

"And what about me?" said Miss Edwardes. "You leave me at a moment's notice—after all I have done. You owe your very existence to me."

"I have worked, and worked *hard*, for my money," said Jane proudly.

Miss Edwardes rose from her chair, and crossed to her companion.

"Jane," she said, "I am a rich woman, and you're the only friend I have. If you will stay with me I will make it worth your while. What can this man give you that I cannot? You will be poor, you will find it a constant struggle to make ends meet."

Jane looked up with triumph in the eyes that were no longer wistful.

"He can give me what I have always wanted," she said. "Love!"

There was a silence. Then Miss Edwardes turned away, and perhaps at that moment there was no more lonely woman in all the world than she, when she realised that she had lost her only friend—when Jane, the despised, the down-trodden, deliberately chose the shabby man with the drooping shoulders and the "four dear, tiresome, noisy boys," instead of all the comfort and ease wealth could offer her.

A sudden rage filled Miss Edwardes' heart.

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"You shall not have a penny from me," she cried; "and I will never forgive you or speak to you again."

Miss Edwardes did not come down to dinner that night.

She sat in her room, alone with her thoughts.

Daylight faded to dusk and dusk to dark, but she sat on, looking towards the ugly house, where, in the small front bedroom, a dim light shone—the room where lay the man Jane loved—the man Jane was to marry.

Jane a wife! Jane, perhaps—a mother!

The two thoughts would not leave Miss Edwardes.

She thought of the four noisy boys across the way whom she had so often watched, feeling glad that she had never married—was she glad *now?*

She thought of the look in Jane's eyes as she told her love story, and she tried to imagine what it must be like to care for someone so much—so much that nothing else mattered in all the world.

An audacious tear fell from Miss Edwardes' eyes, and was brushed angrily away. In the next room she knew that Jane was packing all her modest belongings preparatory to leaving her for ever.

Soon she would be alone—quite alone—she would have to live alone—she would have to die alone.

There was panic in the thought. In haste Miss Edwardes rose, and turning on the light with a shaking hand, sat down to write two letters.

One was to her lawyer—brief and peremptory:

"Come to see me to-morrow. My friend and companion, Jane Ferrier, is going to be married, and I wish to alter my will."

The other was to Jane, and was presently taken to her as she was packing her one box, with quiet happiness in her heart that even Miss Edwardes had not been able to mar.

"DEAR JANE,"—it ran.

"You were always a fool and blind to your own interests. I cannot prevent you from marrying the man with the cough, and undertaking to nurse the four boys through the measles and other things, but I can at least prevent you from starving. I have sent for Rogers to come and see me to-morrow, and you will from now receive five hundred a year for life, out of which you will perhaps be able to supply the entire family with cough medicine. I hate thanks, so don't annoy me with any, but you might teach your four stepsons that a barking dog seldom bites.

"ANGELA EDWARDES."

Knowing Miss Edwardes as well as she did, it is improbable that Jane disobeyed orders and caused annoyance by tendering her thanks, but she never forgot the final injunction in that unexpected letter, and—though she invariably insists on their wiping their boots when they enter the house—nobody thinks more of Miss Edwardes than the "four dear, tiresome noisy boys" who once lived in the ugly house down the road.

THE NEW ARITHMETIC.

Maud, by some ingenious trick,
Baffles all arithmetic—
I remember, clearly, when
I was five and she was ten.

But the years so quickly passed
(Time doth fly so very fast)
That, I don't know how 'twas done,
Soon we both were twenty-one.

Now, although another score
I may add, or even more,
To those other years of mine,
Maud is only twenty-nine!

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THE ONLOOKER

The Story of a Practical Joke.

By Herbert G. de Hamel.

Miss Mitchens is one of the dearest old ladies it has ever been my good fortune to know. She isn't old really, for that matter, yet somehow she has always seemed so to me. Well on the right side of forty, I should say, but with that sweetness of manner and stateliness of grace that are somehow associated with white hair.

Sissy Mascot frankly called her an old maid, but then I don't like Sissy Mascot. Nor do I set any store by her opinion. I don't like her mother, either. I don't like any of the members of that particular house-party. There was Warlington, a tall, loose-limbed, dark-haired man about town, with his sister Amy, who was but a feminine edition of Warlington. There was Neddy Bandon who was short and fair and ultra-fashionable. I thought him an absolute weed, but the others thought him fascinating. The remaining man, Hildebrand Brown by name, was trying, for some reason, to get into "society." They were so different from the simple, jolly folk that one usually finds at Welton.

As I entered the billiard-room after dinner, the conversation ceased abruptly. Sissy Mascot looked bored. Warlington lit a cigarette with unnecessary deliberation. Bandon investigated the sit of his tie with his left hand.

"I am afraid I have interrupted you," I said pleasantly.

"Oh, no, that's all right," said Warlington.

"Go on," said his sister. "*He* won't mind."

"It's a joke," cried Sissy, addressing me "You won't spoil sport, will you?"

"I was not aware that I enjoyed a reputation for being unsportsmanlike," I replied.

"I don't mean in games," cried Sissy. "We all know that you are a croquet 'Blue.'"

"Cricket, Sissy!" laughed Bandon. "Give him a chance."

"I don't know anything about games," she replied petulantly, "only he's so funny about things."

"I am sorry," I remarked gravely.

"Promise you won't spoil everything, and we'll tell you," said Amy Warlington.

"I promise," I answered, "though I don't promise to assist."

"Well, you know that Miss Mitchens is hopelessly smitten with old Grayson, the lawyer at Middleby?"

"No," I replied, "I can't say that I do."

"She is, anyway," continued Miss Warlington. "She is always praising his cleverness and his manners and his looks, and—oh, all the usual, you know. Well, we've sent her a letter from him containing a proposal of marriage."

"What!" I exclaimed indignantly. My remark was drowned in a shriek of laughter from Sissy.

"Of course we'll tell her before she answers it," she said. "She won't really mind—she's a confirmed old maid, really. You *won't* spoil it all, *will* you?"

"Spoil it!" I cried enthusiastically. "Why, I will do everything in my power to help you carry it out to its logical conclusion."

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I sat down in an armchair and laughed till my sides ached. Sissy shrieked delightedly in chorus. The others also laughed, as if somewhat relieved in their minds.

"You're a top-hole sportsman, old man," said Bandon. "One of the best."

"But," I objected, "she will see that the writing is different — and the postmark, and the paper, and everything."

"We've thought of all that," laughed Amy. "Bunco Brown went into Middleby this afternoon and saw old Grayling, and asked his advice on some legal point. What did it cost you, Bunco?"

"Six-and-eight," replied the delighted Hildebrand, "and cheap at the price. I helped myself to some of his notepaper and envelopes out of the waiting-room. I'd got one of his letters which Miss Mitchens had given me for the address, and——"

"And he went off to the King's Arms," gasped Sissy, "and copied the writing and posted it *in* Middleby. He can copy writing just absolutely."

"It will serve her right in one way," said Amy; "she is always fussing round after us and interfering. She can't understand that the modern girl hasn't any use for a chaperon."

There was Warlington, a tall, loose-limbed, dark-haired man about town, with his sister Amy, who was but a feminine edition of Warlington.

"Or that the modern man doesn't look on the after-dinner hours as sacred to himself," laughed Warlington.

"We'd never have come if we'd known what it was going to be like," grumbled Amy, "and we can't very well clear out without offending the Seely-Mastons. That's where we met her, you know. It's not fair to ask people down and give them a slow time. I think this joke will open her eyes a bit."

"I am sure of it," I replied.

Having deposited my shooting-boots and gun safely in the gun-room, I joined the others. They were waiting in the inner hall for lunch. I was the only one who thought rabbits worth the bother of shooting.

"Well," I said, "what news?"

"It's come," replied Sissy. "I've never seen such a good copy of handwriting. I'd have *sworn* it was from Mr. Grayson."

Hildebrand Brown blushed modestly.

"We haven't seen *her* yet," said Amy. "I

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expect it's taken her the whole morning to get over it! I only hope I shan't laugh when she comes down!"

Sissy indulged in a lengthy and sympathetic shriek—doubtless to let off steam while she could.

"My daughter tells me that you have quite entered into the joke, Mr. Cressy," remarked Mrs. Mascot in a tone of patronising congratulation.

"I took part in a joke once before," I said humbly, "but it was nothing—*nothing* compared with this."

"You wouldn't believe what jokes that naughty Sissy plays upon people."

"You are too modest," I murmured; "I *would* believe you."

Further conversation on this subject was prevented by the entrance of Miss Mitchens.

"Good-morning, good people," she said as she came towards us. "I am so sorry to have deserted you all the morning, but I am sure that when you know the circumstances you will readily pardon me. I received by this morning's post a letter from Middleby, and in it"—here she was interrupted by an irrepressible giggle from Sissy.

"What *was* in it?" asked Amy very hastily.

"A proposal of marriage from the man I love best in all this world," said Miss Mitchens slowly. "Mr. Grayson is one of the dearest, best fellows that ever lived."

They crowded round her and congratulated her uproariously. I felt absolutely sick and miserable. I had scarcely believed them capable of this.

"Aren't you going to come and congratulate Miss Mitchens, Mr. Cressy?" said Mrs Mascot suddenly.

"Oh, you *must!*" screamed Sissy.

"Most heartily," I replied, taking the outstretched hand. What else could I do?

"Thank you, my dear friend," she said earnestly. "*You* will fully realise my feelings at this moment."

"Have you accepted him yet?" asked Amy, with a knowing smile at the rest of us, which changed into a frown of vexation as Sissy burst into another loud giggle.

"I shall tell him as soon as I see him," replied our hostess with a smile. "I am expecting him every minute. I think we had better begin lunch without him. Perhaps he did not receive my note in time."

As she spoke she crossed to the large gong, and commenced striking it with slow, sweeping beats.

"We *must* tell her!" cried Warlington. "Here, *you* go, Brown—you've got the most nerve."

"I'm hanged if I do!" shouted that worthy. "I've done *my* share."

"Tell her, Cressy, for Heaven's sake! You're an old friend," roared Warlington into my ear.

I smiled, bowed, and shook my head. He clenched his fists till the knuckles showed white through the skin, compressed his lips into a hard straight line, and crossed towards her. Ere he could reach her the door opened, and Mr. Grayson entered. Warlington turned back to the fireplace, and kicked savagely at a large lump of coal. Brown grasped the lapels of his coat and stared fixedly at the head of a bearskin rug. Bandon slid his signet ring up and down his finger—turning it to and fro—a proceeding which Amy Warlington watched with absorbing interest. Sissy leant back in her chair and giggled.

"I am extremely sorry to be so late," said Grayson, as he shook hands with his hostess.

"Oh, not at all," she replied. "I know how busy you are—and I know that if you *could* have come earlier you *would* have done so."

"Certainly," he answered politely. So politely that Bandon winced.

"I have already told my friends here about your letter," continued Miss Mitchens, "and so, in front of them all, I tell you that I—I accept your offer."

She flung out her hands impulsively towards him. He took them in his for a second, and then let them fall.

"I think you are very wise," said he. "It is exactly what I should have done in your place."

"Oh, what a piece of conceit!" laughed she.

"Conceit?" he queried. "I don't quite see how. I will write to Carmichael this afternoon, and get everything fixed up."

"But how will hearing of this be the least bit interesting to him if he doesn't know either of us?"

Grayson looked puzzled. "I don't quite follow," he said. "Surely it must interest him to know that you accept his offer for the two fields?"

"The two fields," repeated Miss Mitchens slowly. "I—I thought—I didn't understand," she faltered; then added sharply: "I don't intend to sell those fields to Mr. Carmichael or to anyone else."

"But, my dear lady, you said——"

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"Shall we go into the dining-room?" she interrupted.

Brown and Warlington almost sprang at the lawyer. "Stop!" they shouted.

"I must speak to you before lunch," said Warlington.

Mr. Grayson shook off the detaining hand, and continued on his way. "You had doubtless not noticed that my arm is given to Miss Mitchens," he remarked gravely.

"I *must* see you," Warlington almost shouted.

"After lunch, then, after lunch," replied the lawyer firmly, as he vanished through the door ahead.

Warlington turned back with a gesture of despair. "What's to be done?" he cried.

"We must tell them *now*," said Brown. "It will be too awful if that unfortunate woman gives herself away." He turned to glare savagely at the giggling Sissy, who instantly looked scared, and quieted down.

"Who will tell them?" said Bandon. "I tell you, straight, I *can't*. The one thing I am longing to do is to run upstairs, pack my things, and bolt off to the station."

"So am I," snarled Warlington. "So are we all—but we *can't*. We've got to stay and see the thing through. One of us ought to tell her before the situation becomes more intolerable for us. That one is undoubtedly Cressy."

"Thank you," I replied gratefully. "Thank you very much."

"*Will* you?" pleaded Amy. "*Will* you help us? You are *so* clever."

"A top-hole sportsman," added Bandon.

"We won't forget it, either," said Brown magnanimously. "Some day I'll get a chance of doing you a good turn in exchange."

"It is your joke—not mine," I answered drily. "All I promised was that I wouldn't spoil sport, and I'm not going to. The whole point of the joke was to make a fool of Miss Mitchens. Things couldn't possibly look better. Not only have you thrown your net round *her*—but there seems to be every likelihood of your making a hopeless fool of Grayson as well. There is most undoubtedly a humorous side to the situation."

"You're a blanked ass!" said Warlington tersely. "The fool isn't going to help us," he continued, turning to the others, "and he might just as well have said so at first."

"Your manners," I replied conversationally, "remind me strongly of your sense of humour."

"It is time we joined the others," said Mrs. Mascot coldly, leading the way. The rest of us trooped dejectedly in her wake. We found our hostess and the lawyer seated silently at the table. She kept her eyes fixed upon her bread, which she crumbled with nervous, agitated fingers. He, obviously equally ill at ease, leant back in his chair, and let his eyes wander in any direction save that of his companion.

As soon as he naturally could, Warlington turned the conversation on to the subject of practical joking. Brown immediately told a tale about a friend of his who felt unutterable remorse because a joke, of which he was the perpetrator, went too far.

"Serve him right," said Grayson. "I don't want to say hard things about a friend of yours, Mr. Brown, but to my way of thinking there is no more despicable worm on the face of this earth than your practical joker."

"Oh," said Warlington blankly.

"If I had been the judge," continued Grayson, "who tried Browne, the forger, I'd have——"

"What do you mean?" gasped Brown indignantly.

This indignation arose partly from a guilty conscience and partly from the fact that everyone had instantly gazed suspiciously at him. Sissy's face wore the expression of a small child on its first visit to the "Chamber of Horrors."

"I referred to the case of *Rex* v. *Browne*," replied the lawyer. "I am afraid I can't give you the reference at the exact second. However, that and the man's name are really quite immaterial to what I was going to say."

"You looked at me when you said it," declared Brown angrily.

"I was talking to you," said Grayson quietly.

"What *was* the case?" interposed Bandon hurriedly. "I never heard of it."

"It was a case," continued Grayson, "in which a man had the audacity to plead, in defence of the forging of another man's name, that it had *only* been in the perpetration of a practical joke! The judge very rightly pointed out that this fact only served to aggravate the original offence. Did you ever hear such an idiotic excuse? He got five years, it's true, but——"

"Five years!" cried Brown. "Five years for a joke!"

"The test is *this*," said the lawyer, leaning forward—"was there or was there not any intention to *deceive*? If there was, it is forgery."

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"But no one with any sense of decency would prosecute," said Warlington uneasily.

"I would, like a shot," replied Grayson. "The practical joker is a class of criminal that I have absolutely no mercy for."

After this, for a short while, the conversation flagged. Brown's appetite seemed to have vanished. The Warlingtons glared sullenly into their plates. Bandon moved uneasily in his seat. Sissy continually darted little fearful glances in her mother's direction—and derived but little comfort from the unhappy smile which that lady struggled hard to keep alive.

The silence was becoming oppressive, when it was suddenly broken by Miss Mitchens.

"George," she said, turning towards Mr. Grayson. The lawyer dropped his knife and fork with a clatter into his plate, and jerked upright as if he had been shot. He glanced hastily round the table to see if anybody else were going to acknowledge the name—and finally stuttered and mumbled out some reply which nobody could understand.

"George," she repeated, though her voice trembled slightly as she spoke, and she kept her eyes away from his, "I told them all before lunch. They were so kind about it. You didn't mind my making it public, did you?"

"What public?" asked Grayson in a hard, strained voice.

"The engagement," replied Miss Mitchens in a hurt tone. "I had hoped that some one of my friends might have found it possible to congratulate *you, too*."

"Engagement!" he exclaimed indignantly. "Of all the places in this world for idiotic scandal and tittle-tattle give me Middleby. May I ask whose name is coupled with mine? May I ask who started this tale?"

"Oh, George!" she sobbed, hiding her face in her handkerchief. "Why did you write me that le—letter?"

"My dear lady," said Grayson, in tones of apologetic alarm, "what have I said to upset you so? Pray calm yourself. If any inadvertent words of mine have pained you, I offer my most heartfelt apologies. You said something about a letter?"

"Why do you humiliate me li—like this?" she moaned. "It was cruel—brutal—of you if you didn't really mean it. I thought you—you——" The sentence ended in a choked sob.

"What letter?" asked he patiently. "Do try to calm yourself and tell me clearly."

For answer she drew a letter from her blouse and passed it to him. The eyes of the conspirators were glued on him as he took out the sheet of notepaper. A frown of perplexity settled on his brow as he read. Gradually the frown turned to one of wrath. He reached the signature. His eyes blazed and snapped—his mouth drew into a hard, thin line—his jaw protruded. He leapt to his feet—and spoke. We had nerved ourselves for a loud roar of anger. The calm, smooth tones took us utterly unprepared, and every word hit home.

"I did not write this letter," he said quietly, "and I do not envy the man who did. Besides having placed himself—and his accomplices—within the reach of the law for this impudent forgery, he is the perpetrator of one of the most heartless, cold-blooded, and despicable practical jokes that could possibly have been played. It is, if possible, aggravated by the fact that the victim is a lady who has endeared herself to every person in this neighbourhood, high or low, by her sterling qualities—her goodness and kindness. I intend to find out the—the *worm* that has done this thing. I will not insult you gentlemen by even asking whether any of you are in any way responsible. I feel thankful that the sacred laws of hospitality are too highly revered by English gentlemen for this to be even possible."

The silence that followed this speech was intense. It was broken every few seconds by stifled sobs, but these tended to make the stillness even more painful.

Brown rose suddenly to his feet. His face was colourless. "I did it," he said.

"You!" said Grayson, in tones of utter loathing and contempt.

Warlington and Bandon jumped up at the same moment. It was Warlington that spoke. "We all did it; at least, I mean all we men did. Brown, Bandon, and myself chiefly, and Cressy to a less extent. We wish to take all the blame. The ladies knew nothing——"

"You needn't leave me out," interrupted his sister. "I am not the least bit proud of myself—but it was my suggestion originally."

Sissy Mascot and her mother remained silent.

"I can't apologise," continued Warlington. "It has gone too far for apologies. Every word you spoke just now I endorse. I feel it to be no mitigation that we once looked upon it as a harmless joke, and no excuse

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to say that the matter went farther than we intended."

He sat down. I rose to my feet.

"Mr. Grayson," I began. "I can vouch for the truth of Mr. Warlington's last remark. I can assure you that they had no intention of letting this—this *joke* come to your ears. The sole object of this letter was to make a fool of our hostess. They had no other victim in their minds."

This time all three men rose simultaneously, but Brown made himself heard by superior vocal force.

"Here is my solicitor's name," he shouted, tossing a card across to Grayson. "You must write to him about the forgery. As to damages, I won't fight. Whatever sum you name I'll pay and be only too glad to if it's any mitigation."

They must have left the room while we were laughing—for when we looked round we found ourselves alone.

"If you can all get your packing done in time," I said drily, "the waggonette will drive you in to catch the 4.30 from Middleby."

"There will be room for you, too," replied Warlington, as he followed the others to the door. "You knew of this from the first."

It was at this point that Miss Mitchens broke down. Her last few sobs had been curiously wobbly. Now she lifted her head, and, with the tears running down her cheeks, lay back in her chair and laughed unrestrainedly. The party by the door swung round and stared at her in amazed perplexity. It was impossible to mistake her mirth for hysterical laughter, and, besides, Grayson, who was the last person on this earth to indulge in hysterics, was shaking with merriment. I had never heard him laugh before. It reminded me of the baying of a hound. I tried to keep a solemn face, but it was no use. I surrendered unconditionally. I believe I made more noise than Grayson did. Suddenly, above all, rose a piercing whistle. So shrill was the sound that we involuntarily sobered and sat up. We found it proceeded from Sissy, who was laughing her very hardest.

"*We* did it, too!" she gasped as soon as she could. "Mother and I helped in the joke!" and again she became convulsed with laughter.

As soon as he could make himself heard the lawyer rose to his feet.

"In that case, I think it might be advisable," he said, bowing to the Mascots, "if you were to join the waggonette party this afternoon." Then he turned to the others and addressed them. "I should like to say

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one or two little things before we part. First, I tear up Mr. Brown's card in token that I shall not take any steps with regard to his skilful piece of forgery, supported though I am by the purely fictitious case of *Rex v. Browne*. Secondly, you may be interested to hear that I was waiting in the outer hall this morning till Miss Mitchens, by a pre-arranged signal on the gong, informed me that the time was ripe for my entry. I may tell you also that she consented to become my wife rather over three weeks ago—though, at her request, the engagement was kept a secret. In discussing what steps we should take about your letter, we decided that this would be an excellent occasion for making our engagement public, and also decided to have the banns published next Sunday. I may also add that our old friend, Mr. Gerald Cressy, was the only person whom we had taken into our confidence at the time of our engagement. I won't detain you any longer or you will not be able to finish your packing."

Warlington strode towards me. I thought he was going to strike me, he was so angry.

"Why didn't you tell us?" he fumed.

"Because you made me promise not to spoil sport," I replied, "and I wouldn't have spoilt the joke for all the world. I have never enjoyed anything so much in all my life. If—if you could only have seen yourselves, you'd roar with laughter, too!"

They must have left the room while we were laughing—for when we looked round we found ourselves alone.

Now, Mr. Thomas Montague
Had recently been blessed
With such a charming son and heir,
A beauty, all confessed

The happy father's heart, of course,
Was overwhelmed with glee;
But people said he looked so young
A stately Pa to be.

No hair upon his face would grow,
Although he'd often tried;
But now he made a last attempt
By using "Whiskeride."

This wondrous preparation
(Price, per bottle, one-and-three),
Would grow a beard on anything,
From marble to a tree.

He held the bottle in his hand,
And read the label there;
And then, alas! the bottle fell
Upon the sleeping heir.

The bottle broke, and on the babe
An awful sight appeared;
For, even as the father gazed,
There sprouted out a beard.

Herbert J. Brandon.

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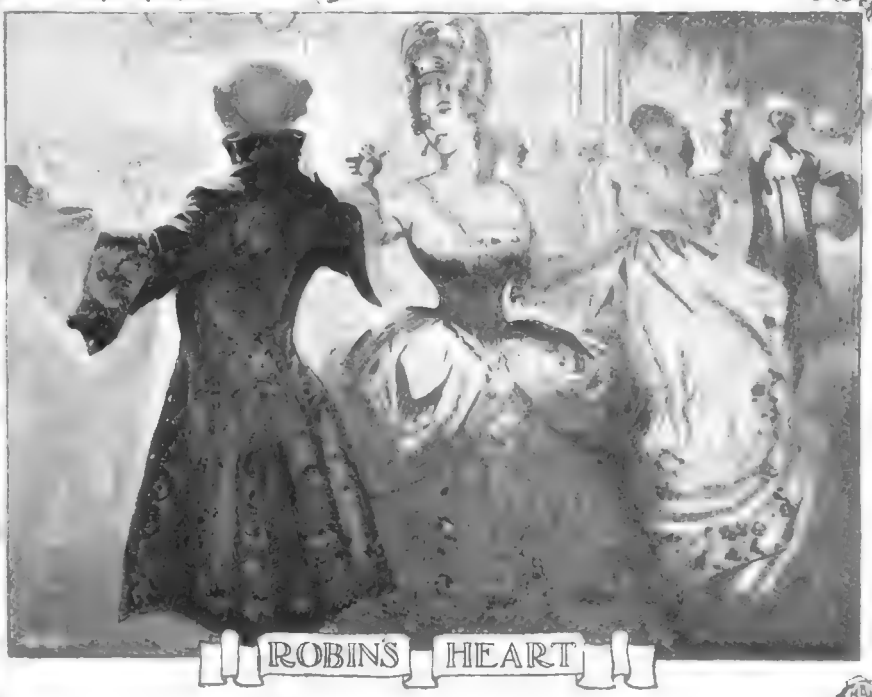

(18TH CENTURY).

Robin's gone to London town
In a coat of blue and brown,
Velvet, laces, buckles rare,
Powder on his curly hair;
London ladies may be kind—
Robin left his heart behind!

♡ ♡

Country Robin's gone to Court,
Where the great folk feast and sport;
Dainty dames will take his hand
In gavotte or saraband;
Sparkling eyes will meet his own—
Robin's heart is mine alone!

♡ ♡

Sweetheart Robin's back from town,
Though the maidens fret and frown;
Fair and stately they may be,
But he'll only wed with me;
London town for those who roam—
Robin's heart has found its home!

Mary Farrah.

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CAP AND BELLS

EASILY SETTLED.

"I confess I am sorely perplexed," said the father with a heavy sigh, "when I think of the future of my boys. It is a great responsibility to have the choosing of a calling in life for them."

Through the open window came the voices of two of the lads at play.

"Look here," loudly exclaimed Johnny, "that isn't fair. You've divided those marbles so as to get all the best ones in your own bag."

"Didn't I have the trouble of dividing 'em?" retorted Willie hotly. "D'you think I am going to spend my time at such jobs for nothing?"

"As far as Willie is concerned," said the father after a pause, "the task of choosing a vocation is not difficult; I shall make a lawyer of him."

* * * * *

L'ENFANT TERRIBLE.

"Uncle," said little Anthony,
Who poses as a joker,
"I wonder if you've heard the tale
About the red-hot poker?"

"I do not think I have," replied
The gentleman addressed,
And bravely tried to summon up
Some show of interest.

The urchin backed towards the door
And fumbled with the hasp "It
Doesn't matter much," he said,
"Because you couldn't grasp it!"

Charles Vivian.

* * * * *

PARLOUS TIMES.

"A man has to draw it fine these days."

"What do you mean?"

"Staying ten minutes after office hours each day will probably make a good impression, but staying fifteen is liable to excite suspicion that you are monkeying with your books."

NOT WITHOUT PREJUDICE.

CALLER (to lady of the house): "Perhaps, madam, you could get your husband to put his name down upon the roll of our society. The subscription is only £1 for a life membership."

LADY OF THE HOUSE: "What is your society?"

CALLER (impressively): "The Society for the Repression of Crime."

LADY OF THE HOUSE: "I don't think my husband would care to put his name down for anything."

CALLER: "Why not?"

LADY OF THE HOUSE: "Because he makes his living by crime."

CALLER (starting back, horrified): "What! Is he a criminal?"

LADY OF THE HOUSE: "No. He's a policeman."

* * * * *

A LITTLE WHILE.

"A little while!" she pleaded. "Can't you stay
A little longer? I'm alone to-day!"
(How soft her voice . . . and how her eyes beguile!)
"Only a *little while?*"

I did not stay—I dared not—far too well
I know her witchery and feel her spell:
Is it not wiser, then, to shun her smile
And every *little wile?*

* * * * *

MADE TWICE THE WORK.

CUSTOMER: "What's the charge?"

BARBER: "Fourpence."

CUSTOMER: "Fourpence? Why, I thought you only charged twopence for a shave?"

BARBER: "Yes, sir; but, you see, you have a double chin."

First Urchin: "What's the bucket for, Mary Ellen?"

Second One: "Me father's in prison, I'm gaanin ter bail him oot."

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A KING IN THE MAKING.

When Prince Herbert, the heir to the throne, was ten years old, King Thomas X. thought it was quite time his education in the polite arts began. "I don't say, my dear," he said to Queen Constance, in the course of a conversation on the subject, "I don't say he need attempt anything arduous yet, like holding a Court, or receiving a Deputation of Representative Grocers from the Borough of Hoxton, but it's quite time he knew how to lay a foundation stone." And Queen Constance gave way after a bit.

The head gardener took him in hand.

So in a few days the Engineers had put up quite a nice foundation-stone in the palace gardens, on the lawn opposite the front door. Of course, as everyone knows, it is the privilege of the First Commissioner of Works to superintend the laying of his first foundation-stone by the heir-apparent, but Prince Herbert had some private coaching from the Colonel of the Engineers beforehand.

There was a very pleasant little ceremony when Prince Herbert actually laid the stone. The First Commissioner duly instructed him in the art of holding the trowel, and showed him how to hit the stone, and say: "I declare this stone to be well and truly laid." One or two really nice people like the Prime Minister, a Field-Marshal or so, and the Chief of Police were asked to be there, and photographs of the affair appeared in the illustrated papers the next day.

Prince Herbert was very proud of himself. He wiped the trowel on his coat-sleeve and then hit the stone a good hard whack, and Queen Constance was extremely pleased. King Thomas was delighted, too, and next day the little Prince was promoted from the rank of Colonel to that of Brigadier-General.

Some months after this Prince Herbert planted a tree. The head gardener took him in hand a week or two before the Commissioner of Woods and Forests was asked down to the palace for a week-end for the formal planting, and the Prince did quite a lot of work with a shovel. All the servants in the palace were called in to represent an enthusiastic crowd on the day when Prince Herbert's first tree was officially planted.

(It was noticed that the Prince carefully wiped the spade on his coat-sleeve before pitching into his job.)

H.R.H. decorated the cook with the Order of Merit afterwards, just for practice. There were leading articles in the paper next day eulogising the Prince, and he was promoted by the King to the rank of General.

After about a year, the King and Queen thought Prince Herbert ought to open a building, and the tool-shed was prepared for the occasion.

The Prince arrived at the edifice in his governess cart, and an escort of Life Guards lent a touch of realism to the proceedings. He was received at the entrance by the building committee (represented by footmen), who were presented by the chairman (in private life the chief butler), and Prince Herbert complimented them on the very efficient manner in which they had carried out their duties. He then declared the building open and made a tour of it, admiring the way in which it was replete with every modern convenience.

Even the Anarchist newspapers next day commented on the tact and kindliness of the little Prince, and the consideration he showed to everyone. A touching anecdote of how he had wrung the hand of one of the stable lads in the crowd, whom he recognised as having built a snow man for him two years previously, was circulated extensively. "Already," said an important journal, "he displays that marvellous memory for faces which has helped his illustrious father to become the most popular monarch who has ever ascended the throne."

Next day Prince Herbert was promoted to the rank of Field-Marshal.

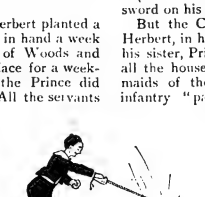
In his fourteenth year, Prince Herbert held a practice Court. Previously, however, he had been taught how to make Knights. His father had instructed him personally in this difficult art.

"It may look easy, Herbert," he said warningly, "but it isn't. I flatter myself I can make a Knight as gracefully as anyone nowadays, but I caught my first subject a nasty smack on the ear. People don't like that sort of thing, so be careful."

The Commander-in-chief of the army always has the privilege of providing a vile body for the heir-apparent's first official Knighting practice. This is because he has faced death so often that he is used to it. That gallant veteran duly knelt on the great day, but even he trembled a little as Prince Herbert borrowed a sword from an adjacent aide-de-camp and playfully hit him over the head with it, saying: "Rise up, Sir Dreadnought Tomkinson."

(It was noticed that H.R.H. carefully wiped the sword on his coat-sleeve before doing the deed.)

But the Court was the best fun of all. Prince Herbert, in his Field-Marshal's uniform, assisted by his sister, Princess Ethel, who acted as Queen, had all the housemaids and parlourmaids and ladies'-maids of the palace, and a whole regiment of infantry "pass the presence," while a brilliant throng of Ambassadors, Dukes, and other well known people too numerous to mention watched him do it.



"Rise up, Sir Dreadnought Tompkinson!"

For weeks before Prince Herbert and Princess Ethel had practised bows and smiles on a stuffed monkey which supported a lamp on the palace stairs, and the housemaids and infantry bore the finished articles with fortitude. The Universities bestowed honorary degrees on the Prince for his kingly bearing during the trying ordeal, and his father made him Admiral of the Fleet.—F. E. Baily.

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THE SIMILARITY.

***Weary W.:* "Fishermen are like tramps, sir."**
***Angler:* "Why so?"**
***Weary W.:* "'Cos they're always lookin' out for a bite, and seldom gettin' one."**

BREAKING IT GENTLY.

MR. TROTTER (to himself): "As I shall be at the office until nine o'clock this evening, I think I'll send Alice a telegram explaining matters."

As he enters the house at ten o'clock his wife of a month throws herself into his arms.

"Oh, Tom," she weeps, holding out an orange envelope, "this horrid telegram came this morning, and I've been afraid to open it lest it should contain bad news. What in the world has delayed you so?"

* * * * *

SHOULD THINK SHE WOULD.

ETHEL (poetically): "How the trees moan and sigh to-night."

JACK: "Well, I should think you would moan and sigh if you had to carry as many green apples as they do."

* * * * *

THE NATIONAL SPIRIT.

A commercial traveller having got a settlement of his account with a shopkeeper in Falkirk, invited him to dine at the inn.

"Na, na," said he, "I ne'er gang to an inn. I'll no gang; but just tell me how muckle it would cost ye to gi'e me my dinner at the inn, ma mannie."

"Oh, never mind that," said the traveller.

"Aye, but I want to ken; just tell me whar I stan'."

"Oh," said the traveller, "perhaps three shillings or four shillings."

"Very well, then," replied the economist, "gi'e me the four shillings an' I'll be just as pleased."

* * * * *

TRUE, NEVERTHELESS.

VISITOR: "What are you in for, my good man?"

PRISONER: "For flattery, sir."

VISITOR: "Flattery? Nonsense!"

PRISONER: "It's true, sir. Imitation, you know, is called the sincerest form of flattery; and I imitated another man's signature, and was caught."

SERVED HIM RIGHT.

"Ah, sir," said a gloomy-looking minister of the Scottish Kirk, addressing a stranger who was standing on the bridge of the *Lord of the Isles* as she steamed through the Kyles of Bute, "does the thought ever occur to ye of the great oncertainty of life?"

"Indeed it does," returned the stranger briskly, "many times a day."

"And have you ever reflected, sir," went on the minister, "that we may be launched into eternity any instant?"

"Yes," returned the stranger, "I have thought of that, and said it, too, thousands of times."

"Indeed?" ejaculated the parson. "Then is it possible that I am speaking to a brother meenister?"

"Well, no," answered the other promptly, "you are not. If you must know, I am the travelling agent of the Royal Lynx Life Assurance Association; and, if you are not insured, I can strongly recommend you to give our office a turn. You will find special terms for ministers in table K of our prospectus"; and, handing the astonished divine a printed leaflet from his satchel, he left him without another word.

* * * * *

TO FOLLOW.

"What are you crying about?" asked a kind-hearted stranger of a lad who was standing in front of a newspaper office weeping as if his heart would break.

"Oh, dad's gone upstairs to lick the editor."

"Well, has he come down yet?" pursued the gentle Samaritan.

"Pieces of him have," exclaimed the boy, indulging in a fresh burst of tears, "and I'm expecting the rest every minute."

***Captain Flirte:* "Why do you insist on my kneeling to you, Mabel? Can you doubt my love?"**
***Mabel:* "Not exactly, Captain Flirte, but you are so vague. Sister Flo has been taking cinematographic films of us from behind that rock. You can get up now, George."**

[*CAP AND BELLS continued overleaf.*]

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TWO SIDES TO THE QUESTION.

DRIBBLER: "In my opinion, a man who writes an illegible hand does it because he thinks people are willing to puzzle over it. In other words, he is the personification of conceit."

SCRIBBLER: "Not always. Sometimes a man writes illegibly not because he is conceited, but because he is modest."

"Modest! What about?"

"About his spelling."

* * * * *

ONE ANSWER.

He was addressing a lowly but intelligent audience, and he had selected for his discourse "Rhymes and Rhyming," so that he might illustrate to those rough and rugged minds how far the charms of poesy can brighten the poor man's hearth. And, touching upon the difficulties of rhyming, he said:

"It is easy enough, my friends, to get a rhyme for so simple a word as 'sea,' but what can you get for 'burglary'?"

"Well, guv'nor," exclaimed one of his hearers, "it all depends on the judge. My Bill got seven years!"

* * *

WHY?

CLERK: "Please, sir, I want three days off, in order to get married."

MASTER: "You do, eh? Not long since you were laid up three days with the influenza. Why didn't you get married while you had the influenza? Or if you couldn't do that, why didn't you put off having the influenza until you got married, and make one holiday answer both purposes?"

* * * * *

NOT EVEN IN UTOPIA.

The time may come when politics will mean all that is noble and good; when a small boy will break an apple in two and give his little sister the bigger half; when a tramp will work, and a stray dog won't bite; but the day will never dawn when a fly can tickle a drowsy man's nose without making him jump.

THE ROAST BEEF OF OLD ENGLAND.

A Frenchman blandly remonstrated with an Englishman for his scorn of French Beef.

"I have," he said, "been two times in England, but I never find the bif superieur to ours. I find it vary convenient that they bring it you on little pieces of stick for one penny, but I do not find the bif superieur."

"Great Scott," cried the Englishman, "you have been eating cat's meat."

NOT REALLY KIND.

He was a bald-headed bachelor, whose heart for the first time had been moved by the tender passion.

"Then you confess," he said in a trembling voice to the object of his regard, "that you like me a little—that you admire certain qualities of my head?"

"Yes," shyly responded the young lady.

"And may I ask," he continued, in a tone of emotion, "what those qualities are?"

"I can hardly explain," said the young lady bashfully, "but I think it is because your head is so mellifluent—I can't express it more clearly."

"And you can never know how I appreciate your high opinion," exclaimed the happy bachelor, as he pressed her hand. He didn't know just what "mellifluent" meant, but he was sure it was the synonym for something grand and ennobling; and, when he bade her good night, he rushed eagerly home, excitedly took down the dictionary, and turned feverishly to the endeared word. His blood changed to ice as he read—"smooth, soft, mellow."

* * *

WORSE STILL.

"I have come in here, sir," said the angry citizen to the superintendent of the tram-car company, "to get justice. Yesterday, as my wife was getting into one of your cars, the conductor stepped on her dress and tore off a yard off it."

"Well, sir," calmly replied the superintendent, "I don't know that we are to blame for that. What do you expect us to do—get her a new dress?"

"No, sir, I do not," grimly replied the other, brandishing in his right hand a small piece of cloth. "What I propose to have you do is to help me match this cloth."

* * * * *

NATURALLY.

A boy whose leg was repaired by grafting some skin from a dog, complains now that his shin barks easily.

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GREAT EXPECTATIONS.

Friend: "So you ain't caught anything yet, Bill?"
Bill: "You wait an' arst me that after I git 'ome."

EXCHANGING COURTESIES.

BARBER: "Your head is sadly in need of a shampoo, sir."

TAILOR (in the chair): "Yes, and your clothes are decidedly seedy, but I don't nag you about it."

* * * * *

DONE.

He had chased a leather football
Over many a gory field;
He could stand behind a batsman,
And the single-stick could wield.
In a pugilistic contest
He was held among the best.
He could mingle in a riot,
And enjoy it, too, with zest;
But his fine physique was ruined—
Crushed in quite a brutal way,
When his wife took him out shopping
On a ladies' bargain day.

* * * * *

MOST ECONOMICAL.

HOUSE-HUNTER: "I thought you said this house was a perfect gem?"

AGENT: "Indeed it is, madam."

"Why, the ceilings are very low."

"That's so; they'll be easy to keep clean."

"And the windows are dreadfully small."

"To keep the sun from fading the carpets."

"And there is no bathroom."

"That's to save soap, madam."

GLAD INDEED!

"Clara — Miss Simpkins," he murmured, as he reached for his hat after her disinclination; "when you think of a little road where we used to wander in the happy month of July, beneath the branches of the green trees, I pray you think of me. For I am like that little road—a lover slain"; and so he passed out of sight.

And then she was glad she had answered him no.

"W..its."

* * * *

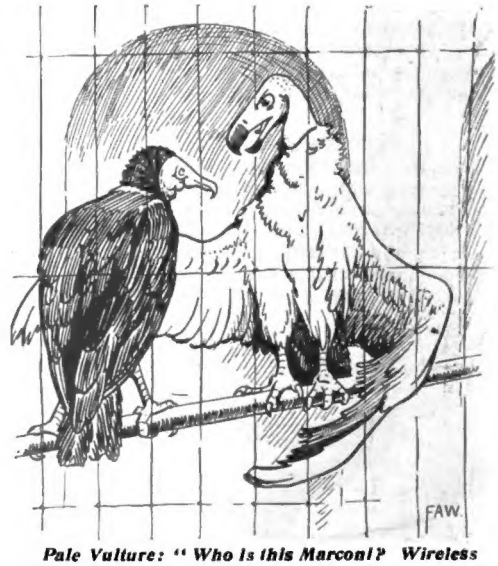
THE WAY OF THE WORLD.

On the shore we sadly wandered,
Arm in arm, my love and I;
For that night must see our parting,
And I thought that I should die:
Severed from my brave, true darling,
Life would be an endless sigh.

"Dearest," said he, sadly gazing
On the face he called divine,
"How I envy those bright moonbeams!
When I'm gone, on you they'll shine;
And the waves will kiss your footprints,
As they hide the marks of mine."

With a throbbing heart I answered:
"I have crowned my King of Men
With a love that is eternal
And beyond mere human ken.
Though your heart dies, or grows colder,
I can never love again."

Thus we parted; and in six months
He was married. Pity me!
Did I die? No; not exactly.
To his awful crime, you see,
There was some slight palliation,
For, you know, he married me.



Pale Vulture: "Who is this Marconi? Wireless this, wireless that! If he would make our cages wireless I might fancy the man."

[CAP AND BELLS continued overleaf.]

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TRUE TO LIFE.

"Thanks," said the tragedian; "many thanks for your good opinion. I always study from Nature—from Nature, sir. In my acting you see reflected Nature herself."

"Try this cigar," said an admirer of Nature reverently. "Now, where did you study that expression of intense surprise that you assume in the second act?"

"From Nature, sir—from Nature. To secure that expression, I asked an intimate friend to lend me five pounds. He refused. This caused me no surprise. I tried several more. Finally I asked one who was willing to oblige me, and as he handed me the note I studied in a glass the expression of my own face. I saw there surprise, but it was not what I wanted. It was alloyed with suspicion that the note might be a bad one. I was in despair."

"Well," said the other breathlessly.

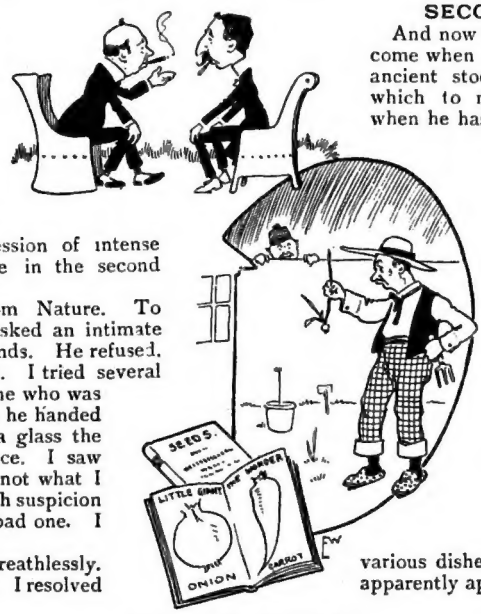
"Then an idea struck me. I resolved upon a desperate course. I returned the five pounds to my friend the next day and on his astounded countenance I saw the expression I was in search of."

* * *

SARCASM.

The Rev. Mr. Goodman paused a moment in his discourse.

"There are five or six persons in the congregation, if I mistake not," he said mildly, "who did not turn their heads when the door opened just now. For their benefit I will state that the sexton has just come in for the purpose of attending to the ventilation. He is attired in plain black, and wears a patch over one eye. I remark, fourthly, that this clause in the text," etc.



WASTED ENERGY.

"Ah, yes, his was a wasted life," sighed the bald-headed gentleman

"Was he dissipated? Had he antipathy for work? Was he a gambler, a lover of fast horses, a——"

"Nay, nay," interrupted the bald-headed gentleman. "None of these, but far worse. He spent his life endeavouring to raise vegetables which should remotely resemble the gorgeous specimens he had seen in the seedsman's catalogues."

SECOND THOUGHTS.

And now the season of the year has come when the small boy unravels the ancient stocking to secure yarn with which to make a cricket ball. And when he has the ball made, he cuts the top off one of his father's boots to make a cover; and when the parent discovers the liberties taken with his boot, the small boy wishes he had used it as a lining for his trousers.

* * *

A HEARTLESS WRETCH.

"It is our first dinner together, darling, and I have invited our old friend Dr. Safeleigh to dine with us."

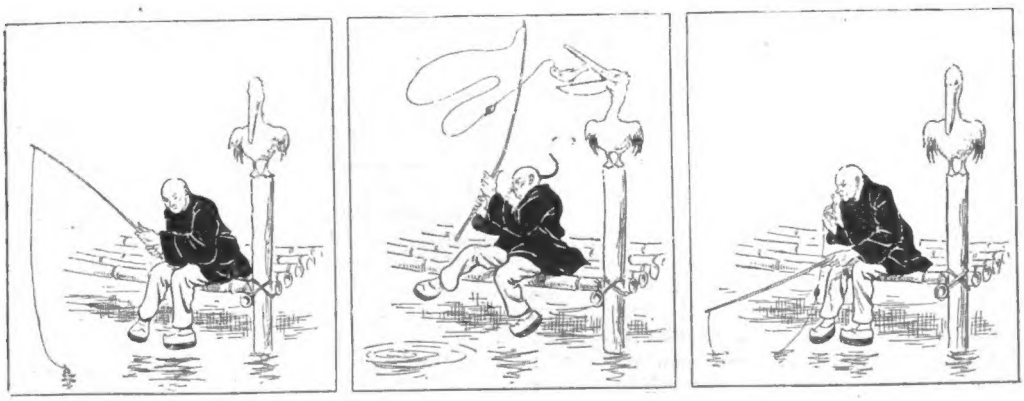
The young wife was quite satisfied. The doctor came to time, was excellent company, and the various dishes, all prepared by the bride, apparently appreciated. It was not until the physician had gone that the wife grew thoughtful.

"Thomas," she suddenly broke out, "why, among all our friends, did you invite but one man, and that man a doctor, to dine with us to-day? Oh, Thomas, Thomas, to think that you were afraid to eat your first meal of my cooking without having a doctor at your very elbow."

* * * * *

AN EXAMPLE.

Next time you shiver at having a tooth drawn think of Joseph Brooks of Colorado. He lay still and let a bear chew his arm off, and thereby saved the rest of his body. It was a wooden arm, but Joseph wasn't to blame for that.



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MR. EDITOR —HIS PAGE.

Some Advice to Short Story Writers.

"ORIGINAL" CONTRIBUTIONS!

LAST month I told you of a queer contribution I had lately received. Here's another—a poem which began with the following line:

Wailing, wailing, wailing, the wind over land and sea.

The rest of the poem went on to describe in magnificent language a tragedy of the Eighteenth Century, when highway robbery was punished with death. It was entitled "Her Son." Now, I'm not a great reader of poetry, yet, somehow, the story seemed vaguely familiar, so I passed it on to a poet I know, and asked him what he thought of it.

"Very fine," he said; "very fine indeed. But why should your correspondent have taken the trouble to copy it out so neatly?"

"What do you mean?" I asked.

"Well, you'll find the poem in any volume of the complete works of Tennyson, under the title of 'Rizpah'!"

Well, I wrote a pretty severe letter to my "Contributor," asking him to give an explanation of his action. As yet I have received no reply. And I don't wonder at it. What possible defence can he set up?

THE STORIES I WANT MOST.

A correspondent writes to ask which kind of short story has the most chance of being accepted by THE ROYAL. If I wanted to be cheaply funny I might reply: the good short story. But I want to be helpful, not funny. Of course, my correspondent presupposes that the story is a good one. Well, fortunately, the story which is easiest to write has also the largest market. I mean the simple love story. If you go through the back numbers of any popular magazine you will find that almost nine-tenths of the fiction are simple love stories. The idea need not be particularly original—of course, if you have an entirely new idea so much the better—but if the treatment is pretty and humorous and the interest sustained, you run a very good chance of a favourable reception at the average editor's hands.

The serious or sensational story, though attempted by almost as many writers as those who pour out their souls in love tales, is much more difficult to write. And for this reason. It depends for its value as much on the idea or plot as on the treatment. It takes a first-rate author to turn out a good sensational story round an old plot; his art and style pull him through. The average writer must first hit upon a very striking or original idea before he sits down to tell a sensational story. And striking and original ideas are hard to capture. I know men—clever writers some of them—who are periodically driven almost to the depths of despair through lack of ideas. All their literary art is useless; it has nothing to spend itself on. Far lesser writers than some of these, but men gifted with ideas, are always certain of a market and a public. So, unless you are a person bristling with plots, stick to the simple love story, and practise the art of telling it with distinction.

HOW TO WRITE A STORY.

Unless you happen to be a very sure and proficient story-writer, make what dramatists call a scenario of your plot before you write it out. Even great and famous novelists like Hall Caine do not disdain this method. I have heard that the author of "The Christian" makes a scenario or a rough draft even down to minute details of every story he undertakes before he writes it out. Especially is a scenario useful if your story depends on its plot, and the plot is in any way complicated. No plot, however original and ingenious, can hope for success unless it is clearly set forth, and you will find a scenario your best guide in this direction.

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